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HITLER SPEAKS AGAIN

Perhaps because events were critical, perhaps because the speech had already been recorded several weeks ago, the Führer did not wait to address the German people, as was his habit, until January 30th, but addressed them on New Year's Day. Reports from neutral sources had already made it clear that Hitler is not dead, but that he was severely shaken by his narrow escape on July 20th and that the plot against the Nazi regime last summer was formidable, and ruthlessly avenged. A Swedish account gives 2,000 officers and 300 civilians as the number executed. Hitler had nothing to say about this. He only emphasised that foreign Powers failed to understand the nature of the National Socialism which wipes out all opponents and makes revolution impossible. He had nothing to promise the German people except that Germany could continue the war into 1946. He no longer boasted of German victory. He was content to reassure the bombed and miserable people of Germany that the Allies were once again discussing how to cook their hare before they had caught it. Any value as propaganda that his speech had came from the fact that it coincided with Rundstedt's counter-offensive on the Western front.

Hitler remains, then, a symbolic figure behind whom Himmler and the Party now rule Germany. They have so far successfully prevented any political revolution; indeed, no revolution from below is to be expected in a country which is being indiscriminately bombed, which is stringently policed, and which is not offered any alternative but the destruction which Hitler prophesies in the event of its defeat. A long protracted war on the modern scale, in which heavy guns and mines complete the destruction which the bombers began, produces mainly fatalistic apathy. The German population which has fallen so far into Allied hands—a mixture of Germans and foreigners imported to work inside Germany—is not capable of a political attitude, nor indeed of understanding the world in which, by accident, it continues to exist. Those who have no homes, no food, no clothes, no personal possessions of any sort, and often no relations left, belong to a great new International of Dispossessed. It is difficult to think of them as belonging to any particular nationality. Those who give them food and shelter are their friends; all others are their enemies, whatever their uniform. If, indeed, the war continues as Hitler prophesies, Europe will be largely populated by these dispossessed, uprooted, denationalised, apathetic and miserable beings, and most of the arguments about "hard" and "soft" treatment for Germany and the punishment to be inflicted, or not, on the German people, will be forgotten in the real problem of how to save Europe as a whole from hunger, disease and final decay.

How considerable the surviving underground opposition to Hitler still is we do not know: we only know that Catholic and Communist opponents still exist. The stories of the anti-Nazi youth movement called Edelweiss Pirates are mainly misleading. The truth is that Edelweiss is the name given, presumably because of its association with free mountain air, to the largest organisation of young people in revolt against Hitler Jugend discipline. The organisation, if it can be called such, exists all over Germany, but it is no more significant than is the existence of the Black Market. Boys and girls, ranging from 14 to 18 years old, in the intolerable war conditions of Germany, have banded themselves together under various fanciful titles to oppose authority. Many are immature gangsters jealous of the Nazi gangsters. Most of them are rather what we would call Dead End Kids, such as have appeared in every country during revolution or the anarchic period which precedes it. They kill and beat up and loot. They are not material from which a new civilisation can readily be built, nor are they capable of making a revolution which might end the war.

At their next meeting the task of the Big Three in relation to Germany, will be two-fold. In the first place, they must puncture the hopes which Goebbels has raised, that disunity among the Allies gives German diplomacy a chance of securing, in a war-weary world, peace terms representing a stalemate truce. That is essential, but it is not enough. For the Allies, the present temper of the German soldier, hardened by desperation into obdurate bravery, is a warning that, if we neglect the political weapon, the war may last as long as Hitler suggests—with a cost in lives terrible to contemplate. We cannot count on active revolution in Germany; the dissident Generals, who alone might have succeeded, failed and have left no potential imitators. But the German war machine depends on the passive willingness of the common soldier and labourer to fight and work. He must be convinced that Germany cannot win and that personal and national survival depend on ending the war quickly. The publication of unofficial schemes for parcelling Germany have provided Goebbels with invaluable propaganda. The Big Three should issue an authoritative statement, making clear their agreement that Germany will never be allowed to revive as a military Power but can again be a country in which Germans can live a life of decency and self-respect.

Liberation—Russian Model

The new Provisional Government of Hungary, whose first act has been to declare war on Germany, conforms pretty closely to the pattern set by the U.S.S.R. in Rumania and Bulgaria. Headed by a brace of Horthy's generals, as Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, the administration embraces representatives of the National Peasants', Social Democrat and Communist Parties, together with a number of independents such as Count Teleki. That is, it is a very broadly based coalition, from which only Fascists and collaborators are excluded. Its programme is in no way Communist (it has not even repudiated Horthy as Head of the State) but an instalment of land reform, as in Bulgaria and Rumania, is promised immediately. In short, Russian policy seems to favour, at the moment, the establishment in South-Eastern Europe of more or less democratic Governments not identified with Soviet principles and given rope to deal with their own problems in their own way (and, it may be, to hang themselves) provided their soldiers march in step with the Red Army against the Reich. The policy is flexible: in Bulgaria, the pro-Axis Regents are on trial for their lives; in Rumania

there is toleration for monarchy—though not for Anglo-American oil interests. But in every case the indispensable condition of Russian support is loyalty to the cause of the U.S.S.R.

The Lublin Problem

In pursuance of the same policy the Lublin Committee has now been permitted by Russia to declare itself the Provisional Government of Poland—a decision which became inevitable when the long efforts at compromise with the London Poles were finally nullified by their intransigence. On this point we now have the incontrovertible evidence of Mr. Mikolajczyk himself who, as the *Observer* tells us, was the author of a blunt article in the Polish Peasant Party's weekly *Jutro Polski*. This article confirms our diagnosis that the London Poles have throughout "banked on Russian military defeats." It is a tragic story, since the London Poles can never again rule Poland without making war on the Soviet Union, while the Lublin Poles, without the adherence of the Peasant Party, remain inadequately representative. Russia's tacit approval of the new Government, however, puts the British and U.S. Governments in a difficulty, since repudiation of the London Poles, which must come sooner or later, will create something of a political storm in the United States. In his recent speech, however, Mr. Churchill himself stated the Russian case, that without a political settlement the Red Army might find its task of defeating the Germans in Poland gravely impeded by clashes with pro-London Polish guerrillas. Delay in the Russian offensive in Poland, which might allow the Germans to move troops from the eastern to the western front, is the last thing the Allies want.

No Change: No Progress

It was common knowledge that the Cabinet was not contemplating any major changes in the structure of Local Government, so the White Paper published this week is hardly a fresh disappointment. But surely it was unnecessary for the Ministry of Health to indulge in such eulogies of the present system. It is one thing to say that there is no agreement amongst local authorities about the reforms that are required, but quite a different matter to deny their necessity. There is to be a Boundary Commission with executive powers to review and adjust the status and boundaries of individual authorities. This means little more than that the old powers of the Ministry of Health and the County Councils are now to be vested for convenience in a single body. But London is to be excluded from the jurisdiction of the new Commission. Some further "administrative body" is to be created to deal with the relations between the Metropolitan boroughs and the County and to consider the possible extension of the County boundaries. By insisting, quite rightly, that the size of London and the number of authorities concerned involves special procedure, the Government have skated round all the serious issues raised in the reconstruction of the London area. Because some authorities have already begun "recasting their educational services and will shortly be confronted with other similar tasks" it would be a mistake to interrupt them, we are told. It is this kind of approach which characterises the whole of this timid and wholly unsatisfactory document. If ever there was a time to recast the structure of English local democracy, it is the immediate post-war period. The White Paper claims that any major reforms would hold up the fulfilment of the housing, health and educational policies envisaged by the Coalition. The truth is that the Coalition, in thus blocking the reform of Local Government, has given the final proof that it does not will the means to achieve any of its professed social ends.

The New Call-Up

The announcement that the Army is to have another quarter of a million men came, when it was first made, as something of a shock; for British man-power is already so fully stretched that it was not easy to see where the new recruits were to be found. What has been said since appears to suggest that a large part of the quarter of a million is not really additional to what would be expected in the normal course of things. It seems to include the boys reaching military age, as well as a substantial number of transfers from Air Force and Navy personnel to the Army. Even so, the new call-up is bound to defeat hopes of an improvement of civilian supplies in the New Year. It means that men who can be released from work on munitions and are fit for active service will be sent into the Army and not back to their normal industrial jobs. No one will object to this, or be inclined to dispute its necessity. Whatever discontents the public may have, it is not ready to run any risks of stinting the war effort in what we all hope are the last stages. What is important is that the call-up shall not be allowed to take away those key workers whose presence is demonstrably necessary for getting industries ready to resume normal production. They are not numerous, and many of them are well on into middle age. It will be better to comb very thoroughly the younger groups in the munition works and in the civil services.

Motor Industry's Future

Too little attention has been paid to the implications of a change, announced last month by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in future methods of assessing the licence duty on motor cars. Hitherto the tax has been graduated in accordance with the size of cylinder bore—a basis which encouraged designers to produce a "delicate," high-revving engine with abnormally long cylinder stroke. The decision to base the tax in future on the cubic capacity of the cylinder will at least remove the incentive which led to this distortion in design. But it will do nothing to assist the production here of large, inexpensive cars which could compete with U.S. models in export markets. A 24 h.p. car (now taxed at £30) will be classified as a "3-litre" and will pay the same tax. There would have been no insuperable difficulty in obtaining the necessary revenue by other means—for instance, taxes levied on petrol and tyres, or by a licence duty based on the initial cost of the car, irrespective of size. This would have helped British motor manufacturers to produce for export, but it would have deprived them of the protection in the home market which they obtain by a tax which penalises large engines and consequently makes an American car costly to run. We have, in fact, decided to adhere to a policy of giving monopoly capitalism in the motor industry a highly restrictive form of fiscal shelter.

Inflated House Prices

It is to be hoped that, after the Recess, efforts will be made in Parliament to secure the appointment of a Select Committee to report on the possibility of controlling prices of houses for sale. It would have been better if the Government, in those heroic days of 1940 when we were told that property and persons alike were to be conscripted, had fixed a "ceiling" for the selling prices of houses. As it is, scarcity is being shamelessly exploited by house-owners; in the past two years prices "with possession" have doubled in London and the Home Counties and have risen on the average—excluding areas remote from a railway—by 50 per cent. in the West Country and the North. Already we are approaching a situation in which a vacant house costs a minimum of £500 per bedroom, and prices are steadily rising. Control to-day may be more difficult to apply than it would have been four years ago; and the Town and Country Planning Bill has given official blessing to a 30 per cent. increase in values. But if a storm of rage from the demobilised and homeless is to be avoided when hostilities end, something will have to be done to curb this racket. What is urgently needed to-day is a one-clause Act providing that no house purchased since 1939 may be sold for more than the price paid for it. This would at lea out-manœuvre the speculators; and why shou anybody who was lucky enough to get a "bargain in house-property during the war make a pro out of fellow-citizens' necessity?

The Miners Unite

The new National Union of Mineworkers h come formally into existence this week. T miners in all the coalfields are now at last join together in a single bargaining body, which w control all negotiations on wages and workin conditions as well as matters of general industri policy. This long-overdue unification will ma it impracticable for the owners, even if t mines remain in private hands after the war, t go back to the system of district bargaining which they have insisted hitherto. The Minin Association has always maintained that it is n a bargaining body and that all powers in wag and similar questions rest with its affiliate district associations. The miners, on the othe hand, have always wanted a national system wage determination, and have demanded "national pool" to make up wages in the le remunerative areas. Such a pool now exis under the Control, and any attempt to get rid it at the end of the war would obviously mean major crisis like that which accompanied "d control" in 1921. The new Union of Mine workers stands definitely for public ownership advocacy of which has been written into i constitution; but whether nationalisation com soon or late, the consolidation of the miners in a single body will evidently strengthen the position and make for a more clearly define and consistent policy. The district Unions w not disappear altogether: they will remain i being for the administration of friendly benefi on the varying scales favoured in different coa fields. They will, however, cease to be centre of policy-making, and the Mineworkers' Nation Conference and National Executive will be le able to push off responsibility on the local bodi —a besetting sin of the miners' leadership in th past.

The Steel Merger

The merger of Richard Thomas and Baldwin has gone through, in face of the protests of S William Firth, the former chairman of Richar Thomas, whose supporters, after an attempt t secure an adjournment, left the meeting befor the vote was taken. Richard Thomas has becom a matter of public interest ever since, after re building the derelict Ebbw Vale steelworks a an up-to-date strip mill—the first in this countr —it got into financial troubles and fell unde the control of a syndicate dominated by the principal competitors and the Bank of England The troubles have long been over; and Richar Thomas is now a highly profitable concern but the controls have remained in the hands the nominees of its rivals. The question in volved in the present case was whether it w the right policy for Richard Thomas to take ove at the price proposed, the much less up-to-da works of Messrs. Baldwin. Sir William Firt while not differing on principle, held that th shareholders of Richard Thomas were bein asked to pay a grossly inflated price for plan which they would have immediately to scra What the victorious majority argued is not clea for in effect they did not trouble to argue at a making the issue one of confidence in the Boar and presumably relying on the large blocks shares held by the Bank of England and th nominee companies of the other banks. Th layman is in no better position than the shar holders were for judging whether the price w reasonable. We make no charges, because w cannot know where the truth lies; but, in vie of what is being said, we should very much li to see the entire conduct of the steel industr in recent years made the subject of full and publ inquiry from the consumer's point of view.

Strange Rumour

Once again charging in headlong fury against E.L.A.S., the *Daily Telegraph* on Tuesday tripped itself up and came the most spectacular cropper. How does a reputable paper come to print the following paragraph?

> Brussels radio yesterday quoted an unconfirmed report from Athens, that the Germans had sent 26 bomber aircraft camouflaged as R.A.F. machines to the Island of Rhodes, to be used to support the E.L.A.S. against British troops.

Note (1). This story, which is headed Nazis Aid E.L.A.S. Report," is admittedly unconfirmed. (2) Rhodes is in German hands and has not been a Greek island since the Classical Age. No E.L.A.S. organisation has been fighting in Rhodes. The suggestion that the Germans sent bombers there to aid E.L.A.S. seems meaningless. If the idea is that they have gone to Rhodes in order to bomb the British in Greece, then they did so in the regular way of war, as they might from any other German base. (3) It would be odd to disguise German bombers as R.A.F. planes if they were to land in a German island; they would presumably have been shot down by German anti-aircraft guns.

STILL SHOOTING OUR FRIENDS

THE early impression that Mr. Churchill had taken the first steps towards peace in Greece has been rudely dissipated this week. He has, indeed, procured the King's assent to the nomination of Archbishop Damaskinos as Regent, and an unambiguous promise that he will not return to his kingdom unless his people recall him. But the fighting goes on and the hope of an early truce has receded. We are killing some of the most spirited of our allies at a rate that has on the worst days touched three hundred. We are needlessly ruining a handsome modern city and risking the destruction of the most priceless monuments of civilisation. While fresh troops are landing in the Piraeus we are postponing any hope of quickly driving the Germans out of North Italy, Rhodes and Crete. Finally, with every shot we fire on this sacred battleground against Greek friends, we make it harder for any of our allies, whether in France, America or the Balkans, to trust or respect us.

The trouble is still what it always was. The representatives of E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. have declared, again and again, that they are prepared to do what is required of them—they will withdraw their forces from Attica and order their followers in the capital to surrender their arms. But they ask that the Royalist forces—by which they mean chiefly the picked Mountain Brigade and the Fascist gendarmerie—shall also be withdrawn from the capital. This General Scobie would not discuss, but referred E.L.A.S. to the Regent. He, in turn, replied by referring them to the new Greek Government, which did not yet exist.

What is the mening of this manœuvring? We can understand it only on the assumption that Mr. Churchill is still in the unbending mood of his bullying speech in Parliament and has not modified his original instructions to General Scobie. These were, as Mr. Kirk, the American Ambassador in Italy, reported to the State Department, that Scobie was "responsible for destroying or neutralising all E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. groups who approach Athens." This quotation, reported in the *Daily Herald* of December 14, has never been denied. It might be correct to leave the political settlement to a Greek Government, provided it were one in which E.A.M. had confidence. But can it be reached promptly? Can it ever be reached at all, while passions are inflamed by the daily effort of each side to kill as many Greek and British combatants as possible?

Weeks ago the Labour Party, which has since sunk into inactivity, called for an immediate armistice. We will be modest and ask rather for a temporary truce without conditions. If it were accorded, in the first instance, only for three days, it would allow negotiations to proceed with some chance of success. If Mr. Churchill has his pride, so also have the Greeks. They are not a beaten enemy, who can be expected to submit at discretion. It is no less urgently necessary to send food into the starving interior. The agents of Unrra, who left Greece under General Scobie's orders, should be instantly recalled. Their charter requires them to distribute relief without discrimination. The moment the "Cease fire" sounds, supplies should be despatched not merely as at present to ports held by our troops, but to those held by E.A.M., which are now blockaded. If we care to win back the regard of this spirited nation, this is the first obvious step. The ugliest mistake we could make would be to use hunger for the purpose of political pressure.

There remains to be cleared up a crucial matter on which the hope of peace hinges. What are the terms which General Scobie requires E.L.A.S. to accept? On another page a correspondent questions our interpretation that they amount to "unconditional surrender," and with less courtesy a contemporary has made the same objection. General Scobie's original demand, made in a leaflet scattered from the air, was without qualification for the instant disarmament of all the guerrilla forces. This rash summons did much to hurry on the crisis. Later he stated his terms in a less absolute form. What he asked for at once was the withdrawal of all the forces of E.L.A.S. from Attica, while its supporters in Athens and the Piraeus must hand in their arms. As Mr. Eden correctly told the Commons, he no longer demanded the immediate disarmament of the guerillas in the rest of continental Greece. But Mr. Eden and our correspondent failed to pay equal attention to the first clause of his terms—that the forces of E.L.A.S. "must carry out his orders as troops placed under his command by the Caserta agreement." What is this but a demand for unconditional submission? Save that "submission" would have been a more accurate word than "surrender," we see no reason to qualify our interpretation.

If E.L.A.S. must do what General Scobie orders, it is in effect disarmed: he may order it to disband, or to lay down its arms when it suits him to do so, or he may merge it, without asking its consent, in other formations under other commanders. What, in short, was demanded was that E.L.A.S., actually in control of all continental Greece, should submit to a British General, before agreement had been reached on any of the points in dispute. Behind it lay the assumption which may still ruin our relations with the Greek people, that its Resistance Movement, which liberated its country without our aid, is composed of "rebels" and "mutineers" who rightfully owe obedience to us.

Another letter, from a British officer in Greece, is interesting because it repeats the misunderstandings, half-truths and slanders that got us into the present tangle. Mr. Churchill has himself answered, handsomely enough, the charge that E.L.A.S. did little fighting against the Germans. It kept no fewer than ten divisions of seasoned and well-armed troops busy, and it had managed to liberate all rural Greece and many of the smaller towns before the victories of the Red Army in the Balkans compelled the enemy to evacuate Athens and Salonica. The prevalent notion, to which Mr. Churchill himself has given currency, that under the rule of E.A.M. (the civilian organisation which controls E.L.A.S.) Greece was in a state of "anarchy," we believe to be completely mistaken. The clearest evidence that we have found is in a despatch dated October 6th in the American *New Republic* of November 6th, from its correspondent in the Middle East. Even then, he was able to describe the Peloponnese as tranquil and contented under E.A.M., whose administration "functioned smoothly" under a Committee "headed by the venerable Bishop of Elia." But the decisive testimony, which he quotes, comes from a Minister in M. Papandreou's Government, who had been a strong opponent of E.A.M., M. Tsatsos, a Right-Wing Liberal. He flew, in his official capacity, from Bari to the headquarters of E.A.M. at Lamia. After a tour of Central Greece this was his published report:

> I saw that reality disproves the false rumours according to which there is disorder and danger coming from E.L.A.S. in the liberated regions of Greece. On the contrary, life has found its regular rhythm: exemplary order and peace prevail everywhere.

So far as we can gather, E.A.M. and its guerrilla bands did not greatly differ from the Resistance Movement of France. In both it was the younger generation and the underground parties of the Left that played the chief part. In both, intellectuals, like Professor Svolos and M. Bidault, were the acknowledged leaders. In both, side by side with the more numerous Socialists and Liberals, the Communists showed an energy and discipline out of proportion to their numbers; but in Greece, as elsewhere, their objective is no longer social revolution. Two bishops served with these "Reds" on its Central Committee. Greece has, however, what France never had, a tradition of guerrilla warfare, perpetuated in the splendid ballads that tell the exploits of the "bandits" (to use Mr. Churchill's word) who liberated her from the Turkish yoke. There may have been some unruly and even a few criminal types in this force, as there were in the F.F.I., but it observed a strict discipline of its own, similar to that of Marshal Tito's army, which also had to live by requisitioning food where it could get it. Both dealt severely with quislings. We do not doubt that some of these would have been court-martialled and shot, if E.A.M. had been left in charge of Athens. But why suppose that it would have carried out a "massacre" in Athens, when it did nothing of the kind in Salonica?

Those who repeat such slanders forget that for a generation the Greek people have suffered from dictatorships. The King tore up the Constitution which his father repeatedly violated. Long years of dynastic struggle and class struggle, culminating in the degradation of a Fascist dictatorship, bred passions that may mislead the unwary stranger who knows nothing of this country's tangled history. It is a mistake to believe (as Mr. Churchill did) the first well-bred Greek of the King's party who assures his British acquaintances that all his political opponents are "ruffians"—even when he can say it in perfect English.

All who are aware of realities in Greece will recognise that, since Britain cannot rule Greece indefinitely, and since E.A.M. is indisputably the effective authority over the whole of the country outside the range of British guns, the immediate need is an armistice or truce. No agreement to cease fire is likely unless some Greek Government "authorises" the punctilious General Scobie to withdraw the Mountain Brigade from the Greek mainland, and disbands the unpurged Fascist gendarmerie and the new Right Wing National Guard. Is the new Plastiras Government designed for such peaceful ends? The omens are not good. The Prime Minister, out of touch with popular Greek sentiment after twelve years of exile, is decidedly Republican but is a violent opponent of E.A.M. No E.A.M. names have been mentioned among the members of his Cabinet, which does not seem even to aspire to be representative of Greece. Behind it stands only General Scobie and the British Army—embarked, by Mr. Churchill's orders, on a campaign of "intervention" repugnant to the British people.

THE PROHIBITED BROADCAST

[The following is a translation of the speech which Dr. Negrin, Premier of Republican Spain, proposed to broadcast from London on Tuesday night to a meeting in New York arranged by the *Nation*. Permission to deliver this broadcast was refused by the British on the official grounds, first, that the radio-telephone service is only available for Government calls, press calls or "approved broadcast transmissions," and secondly, that "Dr. Negrin was permitted to come to Britain as a refugee only on the understanding that he would not indulge in any political activities whatsoever." We understand that no such conditions were imposed on him when he came to England. The text has been shortened for reasons of space.]

I AM breaking my prolonged silence in regard to the Spanish cause—a cause which I have never admitted to be disposed of by the humiliating incident which brought about the total occupation of our territory and the subjection of our people, delivered unconditionally, unarmed and manacled, to those cronies of Hitler and Mussolini who gave them the assignment of being the first Quislings.

I speak now because we are going through the climacteric and decisive period in which, on the behaviour of Spaniards and, in part, also on the attitude of our friends, will depend the immediate future of the Republic as much as the fate, maybe the definitive fate, of Spain.

So long as this moment had not arrived, I imposed silence on myself. Of my own will, without a suggestion from anybody, and still less under pressure, which I should have rejected. And I have kept silence during five years.

With what end and why?

In order not to add fuel to the fire of political dissensions among the emigration . . . in order to concentrate attention on the struggle against the Axis, in the result of which our destiny is involved with that of the other countries. Because, without unequivocal victory over the Axis, there would be no Spanish cause, nor even Spain, since in the end Nazi Germany would not only enslave its enemies, but, like Saturn and his offspring, would finish by devouring its allies, satellites and lackeys. In order to be able to work so that when the day comes we Spaniards may share in the victory with the conquerors, since we have sacrificed as much towards it as anybody. . . .

To-day things have changed. The war draws towards its end. The agony of the enemy may yet be prolonged, but the result is inevitable. . . .

It is urgent for that reason to make clear the position of Spain, in order to prevent precisely those who contributed towards our strangulation from relegating us to the corner of the conquered, when the world is readjusted after the smashing of the Axis; to take care that mediations and guardians disguised as friendly officious helpers do not imprison and handcuff the will of our country; to proceed bloodlessly from the present prætorian despotism to the legitimate regime of liberty, toleration and democracy established by the Constitution voted by the Spanish people in 1931.

Since July, 1936, the Government of the Spanish Republic has considered itself to be virtually and without interruption in a state of war with the Axis Powers, and, in fact, has been with Germany and Italy, which, through a provoked military rebellion, made us a victim of what later was called an *Internal Aggression*, and completed their felony by invading us with regular forces of their respective armies. . . .

As strongly when leaving Spanish soil as on arriving some hours later in France, the Government affirmed its legitimacy and declared that it would continue the struggle indefinitely until achieving the re-establishment of the Republic, which it regarded as subjugated but not abolished.

We never capitulated! We never surrendered! We never acknowledged having been conquered! We do not admit that a temporary defeat was the end of the war, nor that the will of the Spanish people could remain annulled by conspiracy and violence. . . .

From a beginning our policy, that is, the policy of the Government of the Spanish Republic, was to persuade those whom it concerned of the necessity of constituting the broadest possible front against Germany—a front which would include the country to which I address myself—the United States—since we always believed that for the war to be won North America must intervene in it with its power and immeasurable resources. It is true that our persuasive means were small, and even smaller still were our instruments of action, but the day will come when it will be confirmed that in regard to our policy all that could be done was done.

The conflict occurred. We made our position known, particularly to the Governments, and to public opinion, by an open declaration. We advised our compatriots to rally to the war effort and to enlist as volunteers wherever they would be admitted. By tens of thousands the Spanish republicans have come forward to offer their lives, winning glory at Narvik, Bir-Hacheim, Syria, Tunis, Normandy, Paris, in the guerrilla warfare of the French Maquis, on the Russian steppes, and in a hundred other places; in the Merchant Service and Navy, in Armies and Air Forces, as paratroops and in special services. Has anybody an idea of the magnitude of this sacrifice? Well, I shall tell you that the number of Spaniards, of our emigration, who have voluntarily fought on the Allied side is many times—I repeat, many times—greater than that of the mercenaries recruited forcibly by Falangist press-gangs in Spain to form the "Blue Division."

On the day of Pétain's surrender we left for Great Britain, not to seek refuge, because whoever struggles never feels himself a refugee, but because we wished to symbolise with our presence adhesion to the cause of which Britain was then the only champion, and our faith in it when not many had faith.

Why say all this? Simply to record that Spain is not, and never has been, neutral, because she has never relaxed one instant in her struggle: that Spain is a belligerent—the first belligerent, since for us the struggle is now about to enter the ninth year. Clearly, when I speak of Spain I refer to the true Spain, that of the Spanish people, that represented by its republican institutions—not to Spain as a geographical concept. This Spain is to-day an occupied territory as Norway and Holland are and as France and Belgium were until not long ago.

It is in the name, then, of the true Spain that I address myself to you, its friends, to tell you that the Spanish people is in a position to resolve its affairs provided it is not molested. We do not ask—and, moreover, understand it well—we do not want intervention. Two centuries of experience of interventions have left us a bitter memory, because of their heavy cost to us. As for the last, the intervention that was in sarcasm hypocritically called Non-Intervention, we are now paying for the consequences. The examples of the latest years do not either serve to comfort us.

Sympathy, help and collaborations by friends will be welcomed and acknowledged with gratitude. Interventions by Powers—No, flatly No. It suffices if we are not hindered and if the enemies of the Republic are not surreptitiously helped with such cunning weapons that there is no way of countering them. No! Nothing in the way of interventions! It will be enough not to tie us down to inaction and not to interfere with us. And if it is desired to repair a grave insult to justice and the right of peoples committed six years ago, cease from recognising internationally the rebel regime as contrary to the will of our nation and opposed to human honour.

I know that many are preoccupied about dissensions of the republican Spaniards. I do not wish to disguise their importance because to-day those dissensions are the greatest support of the rebels, and the pretext solicitously used b the enemies of the Republic to demonstrate i instability in an eventual future. But let ou friends calm their anxieties. Division of opinio is a phenomenon common to every democracy- a phenomenon which becomes exacerbated exile through the stab of affliction and calami we all have within us, and because the lack control of the popular masses leaves a free fie for the politicians to transgress. But do not tho divisions happen in all democracies, even in tim of war? If the Spanish Republic were a total tarian regime there would be no division There would be an opposition and it would b strangled with repression and terror. As we a liberals and democrats we have to overlook an amend, or at least patch up, the faults which tarnis the excellences of the system. But rest assure my friends, that when the moment comes w shall all know how to dominate passions an differences as we did in 1936, and that there wi be in Spain a stable, tolerant and progressiv Republic—a Republic, without purge or reprisal based on a generous amnesty, one without decei and circumlocutions. Because our Spanis Republic, founded on the will of the people, wi be strong and, being strong, can be generous an will be; because, drawing inspiration from th humane sentiment of our people, it will impos reconciliation, since without it there can be n future possible for the new Spain which wish to contribute with other nations to the creatio of a New World of peace, liberty and progres

JUAN NEGRIN

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this colum goes to A. F. Brown.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of pape and give details of origin. Address to THI ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Accounts of humorous incidents, as well as others unspeakably grim, are circulated in Athen In "No-Man's-Land" a resident with only th slightest knowledge of English was halted by British tank. He was asked for his name an address, which he willingly gave.

Immediately afterwards the tank plopped thr shells into the unfortunate man's house. A typic Athenian, the man saw the joke, laughing heartil when the coincidence was later explained by th tank crew.—From a despatch by Richard Cappe in the *Daily Telegraph*.

The Municipal Council of the Piraeus, in recog nition of the services rendered by British troop have decided to name the main square in the tow Winston Churchill.—Report in *Evening Standard*.

My father's father was Irish and his mothe was Spanish. My great-grandmother on m mother's side was Burmese. I hope to marry a English girl shortly. Is there any danger that ou children will be abnormal?—Letter in *News of th World*.

The tremendous happenings in the world to-da are explained in the thirteenth chapter of S Mark. It is very important for everyone to read it —Letter from Sir Waldron Smithers, M.P., i *Daily Sketch*.

It is admittedly unfortunate that this Germa offensive should have occurred during the wee before Christmas. It somehow does not fit i with "Peace on earth to men of good will" an other slogans denoting the festive season.—*Finchl Press*.

Furthermore, if at any moment Miss —— appeared completely nude when dancing, she wa bathed in a subdued blue light which together wit her unusual make-up gave her an "unreal appearance.—*London, Off Duty*.

A LONDON DIARY

I NEVER thought of Mr. Lloyd George as the stuff of which Earls are made. However, we shall go on thinking of L.G. as L.G. even if, as I hope, he has many years yet to live as the Earl of Dwyfor. During my childhood Lloyd George stood as the great radical reformer who had opposed the Boer War and wanted common people educated and insured, who overwhelmed the Peerage with ridicule, had a splendid row with the doctors (who did very well out of the bargain), and furiously annoyed employers, particularly wives of the gentry, by making them "lick stamps" on behalf of their servants. Next I remember how he changed his mind about the war against Germany after the invasion of Belgium. There followed the period of the L.G. of the knock-out blow, the 1918 election and the disastrous Irish policy, which takes much the place in L.G.'s career that Greece takes in Winston Churchill's. His great mistake (which Churchill also shows signs of repeating) was in being stampeded by the Press Lords and the Big Business gangsters in 1918. Unhappily, this phase of L.G. cut him off from the Left, to which he naturally belonged. English history would have been different if the two ablest practical men who have arisen in our time from the ranks of the middle class—I mean Joseph Chamberlain and Lloyd George—had not been successfully side-tracked by the Tories. In Mr. Lloyd George's case the calamity has been all the greater because his genius—for his political capacity can be described by no less ambitious word—has really been at the disposal of the progressive forces throughout the last twenty years, and has only been submerged by the vagaries of the party system. He has not been a Liberal in the very conservative sense that Sir Archibald Sinclair, or Ernest Brown, or Sir Percy Harris, is a Liberal. He has been a potential radical leader, who, if he had the chance, would have nationalised the rural land of England, and would years ago have given us something like Beveridge and the other White Papers that we now talk about. The mistrust born of the war years would inevitably have prevented him from being a leader until MacDonald was played out, but if he had been able to step into MacDonald's shoes we should not have had Socialism, but we should have had a live radical party and an instalment of the necessary reform. One of the best things about Lloyd George personally is that out of power he never became in the least bitter, but on the contrary he developed new interests, a more kindly but not less shrewd view of life, and in showing how apples can grow out of sand, did a public service at least as important as placing some pretentious measure on the Statute Book.

* * *

Glancing at the list of other New Year's honours, I note with pleasure the Order of Merit for Whitehead and the knighthood for Patrick Abercrombie. On the assumption that they wanted to be Privy Councillors I congratulate Miss Horsbrugh and Ellen Wilkinson. Among the civil awards I am particularly glad of the recognition given to Ritchie Calder, whose articles in this paper and in the *Herald* were so influential in changing the attitude of the authorities towards the East End during the raids of 1940, to Robin Cruikshank, once editor of the *Star*, and to Francis Williams who, though Controller of News and Press Censorship, has not ceased to be the unbureaucratic and human person, who was once financial correspondent and later editor of the *Daily Herald*.

* * *

The American magazine *Time* reported not long since a press conference in Moscow in which Russian war correspondents described the Soviet front to British and American correspondents. Very naturally the foreign correspondents protested. They wanted to see the front for themselves and not to sit around in the Hotel Metropole, passing on to Britain and America second-hand extracts from the accounts of their Soviet colleagues. Long experience of intrigue has bred in the Soviet Union a profound suspicion of the West, and in security matters this suspicion has served them well. In no country have other Powers tried to do so much espionage, and in none have they so signally failed. On this matter of war-reporting, however, the Soviet authorities are making a great mistake. First-hand accounts from the front, written by correspondents whom the British and American publics know, would do more to increase the popularity of the U.S.S.R. than any amount of official propaganda. It is not a new policy—it is an old habit. I remember in 1941 after the German invasion of Russia, that General Mason MacFarlane, reputed to be a very honest and competent soldier, was sent as head of the British military mission to Moscow; he was allowed to see so little that when he reported the beginning of the autumn rains the comment made here was that "things are improving in the U.S.S.R.; Mason Mac. has been allowed to look out of the window."

* * *

One can barely imagine the horror of a great city like Stalingrad or Budapest being destroyed by fire and captured by hand-to-hand and house-to-house fighting. I feel far less bad about Budapest, however, than I do about small Italian cities or than I should about Vienna, Prague, or, worst of all, Venice. Budapest was a grand façade. Like everything in Hungary, it was showy and unreal. Even the buildings are half-fake. I was entertained in Budapest as a journalist in a way which was supposed to be good propaganda. But I knew about the Fascist police methods, the censorship, the bribery and the quite fantastic poverty of the countryside and of the vast multitude of unemployed whom I saw living in tin huts, the size of toolsheds, on a stretch of bare mud a few miles out of Budapest. So I was unimpressed by the purple and scarlet of the ecclesiastical dignitaries, by the leopard-skins of the halbadiers, and even by being presented to the Regent, who, dressed in his Austrian Admiral's uniform, seemed only ridiculous. Land reform has been the real need of Hungary for many years, and the Magyar claims to treaty revision have never been much except the demand of feudal landlords for the return of serfs who were taken from them. Among many things, good and bad, that are being consumed in the furnace of Budapest are the aspirations of British propaganda during this war. At the end of the last war, revolution (more necessary in Hungary than anywhere outside Tsarist Russia), was aborted by the British and Americans, who used food as their principal weapon for combating the popular movement. During this war our Hungarian experts have walked a propaganda tight-rope, balancing between open support of Horthy, who as Hitler's friend could not be openly supported, and open support of the real alternative, which was revolutionary. Feudalism in Hungary was extremely similar to feudalism in the days of Louis XV; it disappears 150 years too late. But, thank God, it will now disappear.

* * *

I hate to know that George Steer will never again breeze into this office from foreign parts, full of racy stories of his adventures, cynical criticism of the authorities and sincere hatred of cruelty and tyranny. He was one of the best of that adventurous school of journalists who have by and large fought on the side of decency in all the wars since the Japanese began the series in Manchuria. Steer, whose father was a newspaper proprietor in South Africa, wrote brilliantly for the *Times* from Abyssinia and Spain. He was also in Africa for the *Daily Telegraph*; he was in Finland when the war broke out there, and later, as a soldier under Wingate, again in Ethiopia and finally in Burma, where ironically enough, he was killed in a motor smash. I think perhaps the best job of work he ever did was his account of the German destruction of Guernica. In his book *The Tree of Gernika* he finally disposed of the myth (put about by Conservative papers, which have somehow since changed their minds about the Nazis) that Guernica was destroyed by the people who died there.

* * *

The news of Romain Rolland's death brought back to me memories of the last war, when his courage and serenity meant so much to so many. I never thought his slogan "above the battle" particularly happy. What he really strove to do, then and throughout his life, was to see the world and its tragedies with a timeless vision, *sub specie aeternitatis*. What he aimed at was not an Olympian detachment: on the contrary he lived the struggle of those days with anguish. Rather he sought to keep alive the values that nationalism and the passions of war-time endanger. Though his mind was French in its grace and lucidity, as in its fearless logic, the influences that formed it were those that came to him from Goethe and Beethoven. They were for him what Newton and English thought were for Voltaire, and like Voltaire he tried even in wartime to keep alive the communion of reason. Music he loved passionately, not merely as an art, but because it is victorious at once over time and frontiers. It was the same striving to see life and the universe round and whole that made the Indian mystics congenial to him, while Gandhi's pacifism found a response in his humanity. His own countrymen assailed him savagely in the last war and all but forgot him in its continuation of to-day. Who knows? When it is over, it may be that men will turn back and find too late in his pages the vision that might have saved them from the abyss.

* * *

A correspondent in Dublin points out an error which appeared in this Diary. I referred to the Irish censorship and said that it prevented the circulation of many books, including historical works. This was a confusion. Many historical works are, of course, on the Papal Index; the censorship applies to works, mainly novels, that contain "obscene" words or descriptions. Often this means that some elderly prude complains, perhaps months after the publication of the book, that a passage in the book has offended his or her susceptibilities and the Board that sits on the matter then decides, on the basis of this complaint, whether the book should be withdrawn.

* * *

I suppose one test of a civilisation is the way in which it looks after its food. A friend tells me that, passing a dairy shop near Paddington at about nine-thirty the other morning, he saw unwrapped loaves for the dairy being thrown from a van into a basket on the ground, while the shop-keeper from next door was shaking a large door-mat at the kerbside a few yards away and filling the air with the previous day's dust. In London and most of the large towns you are not allowed to shake doormats in the street after 8 a.m. My friend, who happened to know this and felt in the mood to do something about it, asked the man with the doormat if he realised what was happening to the bread. To his great surprise, the man replied that 9.30 was the legal time for shaking doormats, that he was doing his best to comply with the law, and that anyway the bread ought to be wrapped. He betrayed some uncertainty, however, by immediately taking the mat indoors.

Where the 9.30 idea originated I don't know, but the various local Acts that prescribe 8 a.m. as the latest hour for shaking doormats are now a century old; and for some reason they fixed the time as one exception to a general rule prohibiting the shaking or beating of carpets, rugs, or mats in the street at any time. In those days, no doubt, there was a shortage of back-yards; and perhaps it was felt that, as doormats collected dirt coming in from the street, it was only fair that the dirt should go back where it came from.

CRITIC

ITALIAN BALANCE SHEET

The author of this article is war correspondent for the Columbia Broadcasting System.

FIELD MARSHAL ALEXANDER, Allied Commander in Chief, recently defended the Italian campaign and protested that the Eighth and Fifth Armies cannot reasonably be expected to drive the Germans from the Po Valley before spring unless the enemy makes some mistake which can be exploited. This was a most important statement. The expressed aim of driving into South Germany from Italy (which never much impressed the public) is revealed as merely a hope, now rapidly receding.

I cannot speak about Americans at home, but here in London one senses that the British public has never been much taken with the Italian campaign as a vital contribution to Germany's defeat. Have we, in fact, had a victory in Italy? A clear-cut victory speaks for itself, and the fact that Field Marshal Alexander felt compelled to issue his apologia would seem to indicate that public opinion is justified in feeling doubt about the whole thing and wishing to reserve judgment until all the facts are in. The writer spent five spring and summer months in Italy as war correspondent, and while men were dying in their great effort he felt constrained from publicly questioning their mission—indeed, the Allied censorship in Italy was always quick to blue-pencil even implied criticisms. Members of Alexander's staff had the habit not only of telling correspondents what they should not write but what they should report. Since the Field Marshal has spoken about the past, perhaps one may also take the occasion for retrospection.

This reporter, for one—and many of my colleagues from that front are of like mind—is impressed by the major miscalculations made in high places. There is not much doubt that the original decision to invade Italy proper was based on a belief that the Germans would not give battle in South Italy, or, if they did, that they could not possibly maintain more than three or four divisions there because of very long supply lines and our own mastery of the sky. The Germans surprised us, and the fight was very hard. It was just the first of many surprises. They held us on the Cassino line, where we lost thousands of men, particularly in the tragic winter attempt by the American 36th Division to cross the Rapido River, an attempt which the divisional commander pleaded against with tears. We landed at Anzio in January under the illusion that the Germans would pull back in alarm from the southern front to Rome or beyond. While Churchill was announcing that we would soon have Rome, and Alexander was scolding the Anzio reporters for being "alarmists," our cooks and truck drivers were being thrown into the line to stem the German counter-attacks which threatened to throw us in the sea. We restored our safety but we lost a strategic, mountainous ten per cent. of the original beach-head, and never regained it until the break-out began on May 23. By that date three thousand Americans lay buried in the Anzio cemetery; the total of British dead I do not know. We had taken some four thousand German prisoners, and they had captured "rather more" of our men, as a Staff colonel put it. After the break-out in May, General Clark's Fifth Army headquarters issued a statement which broadly implied that Anzio was now fully justified—a statement many reporters there refused to send to their papers.

We tried to break the German knot at Cassino in mid-March with much publicised obliteration bombing, followed by an attack by Indians and New Zealanders. It failed completely, and so the front went static until the grand offensive, launched from Cassino to the Tyrrhenian Sea on May 11. That day Alexander issued an order of the day defining his objective as the *destruction of the German armies in Italy*. His troops were told: "You will be supported by overwhelming air forces, and in guns and tanks we are far superior." Nothing was then said about Rome, although, of course, we expected to take it. Rome was regarded by the generals as purely a political objective, of little military value—actually a liability, since we would have to divert transport and men to feed it. Reporters were told that this offensive was directly connected with the coming invasion of Europe, that we were to oblige the Germans to divert large forces into Italy, and that we could accomplish this only by destroying the formations already there. If we merely forced a slow German *retreat* we would have failed in the primary mission.

Now, in his recent statement (I am going on the account in the London *Times*), Alexander said that he had aimed to destroy "as much as possible of the enemy forces" and to produce a first-class victory before the second front opened in France, and that "Rome was that victory." He says we inflicted 194,000 casualties on the Germans (though casualty figures for the enemy can never be more than an approximation) at a cost of 116,000 of our own. At the same time he says that only five German divisions were sent into Italy from other fronts after May 11, a reinforcement or replacement of only one-fifth, since twenty-five German divisions were in Italy on that date. Did we, then, give important aid to the second front?

After Rome, the Allied objective was to capture the Po Valley, which we have not yet done. To-day Field Marshal Alexander says he was left with too little strength, because the invasion of South France took a number of his divisions. It did take several excellent divisions, including all the French and several American. But his statement makes rather strange reading to any correspondent who was in Rome in early August. When high officers then described their plans for getting the Po Valley and, indeed, of driving on into South Germany, they had full knowledge—as did the correspondents—of the total diversion for South France.

We have been fighting in Italy now for sixteen months. We have killed and captured many Germans and wrecked a great deal of their equipment. It was the kind of warfare where wide, sweeping movements are impossible, where troops have no alternative to orthodox, steam-roller advance, crushing town after village in their path, laying waste the countryside. As Churchill said, we have drawn a hot rake up the length of Italy. The consequence is that Italy has become such an economic ruin that the Allies must pour in money and materials for years to come, or be prepared to help millions of Italians emigrate somewhere else. I am informed that of the total productive capacity in "liberated" Italy, approximately one-sixth remains. In industrial power alone, between Rome and Naples, devastation is so complete that it will probably require a year to bring it back to 15 per cent. of its pre-war level. One can hardly begin to speak of the erasure of ancient Roman towns and art works which belonged not to Fascism but to all time, not to Italy but to civilisation.

We knocked the remaining Italian Fascists out of the war. We got bases in the south from which to do important strategic bombing into France, Austria, Hungary and Rumania. The Italian campaign is not all debit, by all means. But some day people will want to know if the returns balance up to the enormous investment of Allied lives, ships, transport and aircraft. They will ask if we could not have achieved almost as much by stopping in South Italy at the Volturno line, securing our port and our bases and using the bulk of the forces in more fruitful encounters elsewhere.

To this observer, at least, this seems a very late stage in the war for commanders to continue to place blame on weather and insufficient forces. Why should we not be frank about Italy and admit that Kesselring, on a very small budget, has done a masterful job in making a primary Allied force pay bitterly for every dubious mile of a secondary battlefield? That, no matter with what self-sacrifice our superb men fought, it was the monstrously difficult terrain of the peninsula, its few roadways encompassed by precipitous mountains, which made encirclement and destruction of a retreating enemy impossible at any stage. But the terrain was not an unknown quantity when the original plans were made. The Allied peoples and history will ask if the blood Italian campaign has, indeed, accomplished anything decisive.

ERIC SEVAREID

IMAGINARY CONVERSATION

Scene. 10 *Downing St.*

Characters. The Prime Minister, King George of the Hellenes, and his Master of Ceremonies.

P.M. Come in, Your Majesty. Pray take a seat.

King G. We thank you, we would sooner have our throne.

P.M. Sooner, you will not.

King G. Later then? By heaven!
My Hohenzollern blood begins to boil.
We are the Hellenes' King by right divine
Yet here we stand, a head without a State
And there lies Greece, a State without a head:
Both must, and should, and can, and will be joined.

P.M. I neither can predict nor guarantee
When subject trunk and crowned head will be one,
But thought it fit we meet and come together
To state and clarify my policy
Lest I should be misjudged and misconstrued,
Which is, to put it in a word or two,
After resolved and firm conciliation,
With crash of ordnance and with clash of arms,
To leave the whole thing solely to the Greeks.
Our General Scobie leaves it to the Greeks
Our Mr. Leeper leaves it to the Greeks,
And so the King must leave it to the Greeks.

King G. What is this it that we must leave to Greeks
What is it but ourself? We are the Greeks
We are the King. You leave the Greeks to us.

P.M. But if Your Majesty would help your cause
Then sign this non-committal document
To hasten and facilitate a truce,
When mighty weapons of conciliation
Have curbed and mastered too-tempestuous change.

King G. Our abdication we will never sign,
We are King George and not King Constantine.

P.M. This is no instrument of abdication,
But in fulfilment of your Royal pledge
Not to return before a plebiscite,
It nominates a Regent for your realm.

King G. We will not have our Kingdom held in trust
Our subjects ought to trust our kingly word

P.M. And so they do, but treasure it so much
They long to have it down in black and white.

King G. We do not trust the Greeks. If we should sign,
Will Britain fix the Athens plebiscite?

P.M. Your Majesty, that is not Britain's way,
But I have found in my experience,
Since by my country I was called to bear
The grievous burdens of democracy
A wise majority will vote aright,
And thus the Right is buoyed and fortified
Sustained and nourished by their confidence
So it may well be with Your Majesty,
Although of course I leave it to the Greeks
And further, by this present instrument,
Your prospects will be brightened and improved.
All may be well. While Britain holds the ring
Free Hellenes may freely elect you King.
Your Majesty may still possess his throne
The brightest jewel in the British zone.

(*King George signs the document, which his Master of Ceremonies hands to the Prime Minister.*)

SAGITTARIUS

OUR RURAL DEMOCRACY

THE author of *England's Green and Pleasant Land* asserted that a flotsam feudalism dominates the English countryside. The book, based on articles that had appeared in the *Nation*, was published in 1925. My four years' close observation of one typical rural district suggests that the assertion is still true. The elaborate machinery of local government is entirely controlled by the representatives of a tiny minority of the population. Rural government is class government. In these parts, anyhow, there is nothing approaching government of the people by the people.

Rural government is in the hands of the Parish Council, the Rural District Council and the County Council. The Parish Council is elected at a statutory parish meeting held once every three years. Every local government elector is entitled to attend this meeting. Every man of full age, who is the tenant of a cottage or unfurnished room in a cottage, and every woman who would be entitled to vote if she were a man or if she is the wife of a man entitled to vote, can be registered as an elector.

I have not been able to see the local register, but I greatly doubt whether I should find the names of more than a very few of my neighbours on it. In this parish, with a population of between 350 and 400, I have never met any cottager who has ever attended a parish meeting, who has any idea when and where the meetings have been held, or has ever used his right to be present at a meeting of the Parish Council, the proceedings of which are never reported.

In his *Labour on the Land*, W. H. Pedley says: "When the Local Government Act which set up the Parish Councils was passed in 1894, agricultural workers were generally of the opinion that it would enable them to control parish affairs. They were soon disillusioned . . . Farmers dislike their workers taking an active part in Council work and, if a worker is elected along with his employer, it is hardly likely that he will oppose the farmer in the Council." If he did before the war, when labour was abundant, he might well have lost his job and been ejected from his tied cottage.

War conditions have largely killed the fear of the employer and the growth of trade unionism (the Agricultural Workers Union has quadrupled its membership in this county since 1939) has encouraged independence. But political indifference remains.

In this village the Parish Council consists of six members—the vicar, the squire and four farmers. Ninety-five per cent. of the population is unrepresented. Four of the Parish Councillors own between them more than half the cottages in the village, and in the circumstances it is not surprising that practically none of the extensive optional statutory powers possessed by the Council for the provision of amenities has ever been used.

One particular example of class government is worth recording. The Parish Council appoints two of the managers of the village church school. It would have seemed natural to appoint at least one of the children's parents. But there is no parent among the managers.

The Rural District consists of thirteen parishes with an area of 56,000 acres and a population of 21,000, of whom some 85 per cent. are wage earners. The R.D.C. has 29 members. They include two colonels, three captains, one lieutenant-commander, one knight, two clergymen and one representative of the workers. Most of the other members are landlords and farmers. In his book, *Problems of Village Life*, E. N. Bennett says of the R.D.C.s: "It is scarcely an exaggeration to describe them as farmers' clubs and the one central tradition of such bodies is, with rare exceptions, to keep the rates down and do as little as possible." And W. H. Pedley says: "They are generally reactionary and the existing problem of bad houses and the shortage of water supplies and sewerage schemes is largely due to the inaction of these councillors." Even the guarded report of the Rural Housing Sub-Committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee, issued last year, regrets the "attitude of complacency" of many of the R.D.C.s.

Ours is better than many. There is, for example, pipe water in all its villages. But housing is the most important of the R.D.C.'s responsibilities. It will be a greater responsibility still after the war, unless there is a centrally administered scheme, and it is not reassuring that in all these thirteen parishes there are only 147 council houses. The cottage shortage is notorious, but the farmers, who own tied cottages, are, for obvious reasons, opposed to extensive public building.

There is a striking contrast between what even the good R.D.C. could do and what it does do. I do not, of course, forget that the war has made it impossible adequately to use all statutory powers, but it is clear even in this district that they were very inadequately used before the war. Remembering that the piped water is supplied to most of my neighbours from one outside stand-pipe for every two cottages and that some of the cottages are woefully damp while others are, as it seems, wilfully ugly, it was startling to learn the functions of the R.D.C. from the official report to which I have already referred.

> They include power to inspect all privately owned working-class houses; power to require the owners to carry out any necessary repairs, and in the owner's default to carry out the repairs themselves and to recover the cost from him; in some areas, power to give financial assistance for reconditioning old rural cottages; power to demolish, and if necessary to replace houses which have become altogether unfit for habitation; power to insist on the abatement of overcrowding and if necessary to provide new houses to relieve it; power to build any new houses needed for the working classes in the district. . . . The Rural District Council also exercises partial control, through bye-laws, of the standard of construction of new houses built by private enterprise.

It would be merely farcical to expect any of the councils, as they are now constituted, to use these powers.

The Parish Councils meet in the evening, and there is no reason why they should not have a workers' majority. The R.D.C. meets in the afternoon, as do its committees, and the worker is practically ruled out of membership. What is needed is a statutory obligation for all meetings to be held in the evening and for transport to be provided for the representatives of the outlying parishes.

The engagement of part-time officials is an evident evil of most of the R.D.C.s. The clerks are commonly local solicitors, who may have private clients among the councillors. The Medical Officer of Health, who in this district receives the exceedingly moderate salary of £190 a year, is also a part-timer. The M.O.H. acts for more than one district and I cannot discover whether or not there is a rule against his having private patients. The Surveyor is the official responsible for housing, and Streeton Steed fills a page of his informative pamphlet, *Cottages and Countrymen*, with a list of the duties of this rural Pooh-Bah, finishing with the question, "On top of all this can we expect him to exhibit the standard of creative genius we need in providing our country cottages?"

Finally there is the County Council. There are ninety members of our County Council, and Labour has four representatives. The House of Lords is represented by the same number of Councillors and with them is a phalanx of baronets and knights, generals and admirals, majors and captains. It is unnecessary to recapitulate the extensive powers of the County Councils, and it is sufficient to suggest that they have a greater influence on the daily lives of the workers than the Parliament at Westminster. If it is difficult for a working man to attend the meetings of the Rural District Council, it is infinitely more difficult for him to be an effective County Councillor. In a large and sprawling county, the county town is many miles from some of the villages and transport is impossible for anyone who does not possess a private motor-car. The consequence is that Labour's ridiculously small number of representatives are either left-wingers with leisure or Trade Union officials.

The immediate moral to be drawn from a study of rural local government is that the rural housing problem can never be solved without a national scheme, carried out by a central authority. The second conclusion is that drastic legislation is necessary to give reality to the present sham countryside democracy. The rural districts should be enlarged to make it possible for the engagement of well-paid, full-time officials. Members of the councils should receive travelling expenses and be paid for lost time at their work and, most necessary of all, the Labour Party should launch a campaign for quickening the political understanding of the rural worker. Here I am certain the fields are ready for harvest, but the labourers are not few. There is none. A new class-consciousness is very obvious in groups in the village inn. Rural parliamentary seats could be won for Labour with perseverance and understanding agitation, and popular local government could be secured.

SIDNEY DARK

TUPPENCE COLOURED

"Babes in the Wood," His Majesty's
"Cinderella," Winter Garden
"The Glass Slipper," St. James's

At His Majesty's you can't see the Babes in the Wood for the trees. But how good some of the individual trees are: the rhythmic patterns of Eddie Gray's juggling with clubs, the burlesque ballet and, best of all, the Gray-Nervo-Knox slow-motion wrestling act, which has all the crudeness, colour and fun of a Gillray caricature. To come to the story, there is Adèle Dixon, admirable as Robin Hood, a pair of accomplished Babes (but why not a boy Babe—are little girls more talented?), a troupe of dancing children, and a whole stageful of chorus lovelies. The mixture is traditional; something for everybody. High romance for some, low comedy for others, legs for all. Jokes for the grown-ups slipped quickly between quite different jokes for the children. Then there is the chancy business of getting the audience to co-operate. Your neighbour in the stalls may be snatched away, and appear a moment later on the wrong side of the footlights, caught up in five minutes' impromptu ragging. "Why, here's Lord Nelson himself!"—this was the comedian's greeting to a sailor with a shield over one eye. Scenery and costumes have the proper pantomime timelessness—a painted onion dome in the village of Sunnydale, a baroque column or two in Nottingham Goose Fair; eighteenth-century velvet for the Principal Boy and racecourse checks for the villain.

Picking your way among the cabbages, carrots and celery of Covent Garden, you may be surprised to meet half a dozen handsome foxhounds. This is less fun than *Babes in the Wood* and lacks the charm and wit of *The Glass Slipper* members of the cast of *Cinderella*. Binnie Hale, elegant in silver and black, sings her experienced way through the part of Prince Charming. Bobby Howes' mobile features have the right wistful appeal of Buttons. Knockabout humour, simple and direct, is the job of the Brokers' Men, and a somewhat more subtle brand is put across by Minnie Mumm, that is to say, Hermione Baddeley. The ballet, a froth of tinted tarlatan, has Prudence Hyman as its bright particular star. There are lavish and amusing drop-curtains, and Cinderella's glass coach is drawn by four royal cream ponies. The whole thing rollicks home to a spectacular finish in one of those spun-sugar palaces that are the necessary end of every pantomime.

The Glass Slipper is the lightest of meringues compared to the plum cake at Winter Garden. It is described as a fairy tale by Herbert and Eleanor Farjeon, with music by Clifton Parker. The tale is

of course, Cinderella again, but with the emphasis shifted so that the natural relation of one character to another is restored. Thus Cinderella's father is no figure of fun, but a gentle and harassed old man who brings sugar plums from the party for his daughter left at home. Instead of the clowns there is a Herald who has a firm way with a too-presuming Countess of Caraway or Margravine of Mace, and an endless fund of rhymed advice: "To be tacit is an asset," "To be loquacious is never gracious." This is a brilliant part, and Geoffrey Dunn misses none of its opportunities. By contrast with the talkative Herald, Eric Micklewood is a silent and single-minded Prince (not, be it noted, Charming), and his witless Zany, commenting in mime on the proceedings, is perfectly played by Lulu Dukes. The Ugly Sisters, Araminta and Arethusa, are almost handsome, but their manners remain unimproved; they still go in for shoehorns and soap-on-the-heel in the moment of crisis. The naivety of Cinderella is charmingly done by Audrey Hesketh. Madame Rambert supplies the Ballet and Harlequinade, the former black and white and classical, the latter a gay-coloured comic. Sally Gilmour and Walter Gore are principal dancers. The cast is notable for its audibility, and the play for its refreshing quality, sparkling as it does with Farjeon polish and wit.

MERRILL AVERY

THE MOVIES

"Message from Canterbury," at the Academy. "Dark Waters," at the London Pavilion.

This is the time of year when film reviewers, turning over their files, draw up a list of the ten best films. Why? No one else, so far as I know, from music critics to racing correspondents, indulges in this annual sport of accounts. How few of the ten will be retained after another twelve months! We must remember, perhaps, while we can; nothing in celluloid is imperishable. 1944, then, for me, produced one masterpiece, *Le Jour se Lève*. Apart from that, the year went for the first time to English films, which gave us both the best and the worst. I recall the intense pleasure of seeing *This Happy Breed*, *The Way Ahead*, *Henry V*, *Western Approaches*; and hardly less acute was the discomfiture of *Dream Days* and *Madonna of the Seven Moons*. But longer than any of these, I suspect, will be the images of a dog revived ten minutes after death and of Toscanini conducting.

Unforgettable in the true sense is a half-hour film showing at the Academy this week. *Message from Canterbury* engraves its stones on the mind with the help of choral music by Purcell, Tallis and Orlando Gibbons—a perfect wedding; while we listen to the voices the camera unobtrusively reveals a great work of art, earmarked not long ago by the Germans for destruction. But this is not only a record of Canterbury Cathedral. The late Archbishop Temple delivers from the pulpit a sermon—partly historical, partly a statement of Christian Socialism—which for matter and utterance knocks any movie voice out of our heads. Did Miss Hepburn cause a sensation once by talking in a film for ten minutes without stopping? What did she say? And who is Miss Hepburn? I am grateful to Mr. George Hoellering for having made this moving and dignified record. The camera could more often pay its tribute to great works of art and great men. Shaw, Picasso, Sibelius, T. S. Eliot, Claudel—to mention only a few obvious names—are worthy of more than the usual screen interview. What wouldn't we give now for a sympathetic record of Henry James making his excuses for being late at luncheon or of a George Moore evening in Ebury Street? The Academy, by the way, has much the best holiday programme in town. *Dumbo* is revived, and *Tarakanova* (in case you missed it) is historical romance as it should be, but rarely is, on the screen. Lovely settings in eighteenth-century Venice and St. Petersburg, and a touching tale of a young pretender to the throne of Catherine the Great.

Dark Waters is a psychological thriller with a rich background in Louisiana. There aren't tigers in the undergrowth or crocodiles in the lake, but a wholesale murderer and his half-cracked assistant make good substitutes. They devise ingenious tricks to play on the nerves of Miss Oberon who, after being torpedoed by the Japs, has gone to the country for a little quiet. Thomas Mitchell, so often sympathetic, indulges here in refinements of evil. His motive—to grab the estate—seems a little unconvincing. Over-lush atmosphere, but the high moments play on our nerves as well as Miss Oberon's, and it is with genuine relief that we see her drive sleekily away down the dark avenue.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Critic," at the Arts

This is the funniest Sheridan, a mixture, say, of Oscar Wilde and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. The opening conversation might be overheard in any theatre bar to-day. With the entrance of Puff wit takes a jump into fantasy—the modern Puff is shabbier in his approaches—and his Tragedy at Drury Lane manages to combine wild parody with an almost tender appreciation of the author who is always intervening. Mr. Hugh Borden plays Puff with debonair grace and an expectant fondness that never vanishes under the eighteenth-century enamel: a subtly excellent performance. He trusts the actors, and they make dreadful cuts. Mr. Sneer and Mr. Dangle from a stage-box offer unpoetic advice. Tilburina, mad in white satin, trips on the scene attended by her confidante, mad also, but in linen. "Keep your madness more in the background, girl," exclaims Puff to the maid. In the end, Puff conducting, we witness "A Careful Re-enactment of the Defeat of the Spanish Armada with Spectacle and Song." Never did tragedy reach a more joyful conclusion. The whole production by Miss Judith Furse is beautifully fresh and unmannered. From an excellent cast it is hard to choose; but Sir Fretful Plagiary (Gravely Edwards), Don Ferolo Whiskerandos (Tony Quinn) and Tilburina (Dorothy Reynolds) especially caught the attention.

A GRACE FOR BLACK MARKET TURKEY

Let us with a knowing wink
Praise the Lord for food and drink,
Who His choicest gifts doth send
Unto them with cash to spend.

Praise for Him who points the way
To repletion on His day,
Heeding but His chosen's call,
Knowing birds too few for all.

Unto Him we bend the knee
Who made markets coupon-free,
Where plump turkeys hang in rows
Ripe for those and such as those.

Praise Him Who, with broadest mind,
Saved us all from being fined;
Who by giving us thick skin
Spared us consciousness of sin.

ALLAN M. LAING

Correspondence

BRITAIN AND GREECE

[*We print a selection of letters received this week on the Greek crisis and we refer to criticism contained in them in our leading article.*]

SIR,—In your issue of December 23, you say "They (The E.A.M. and E.L.A.S.) still face a demand for unconditional surrender since General Scobie requires not merely the disarmament of all the partisans of the E.A.M. in Athens, but the placing of all its forces in the rest of the country under his orders." Speaking in the House of Commons on the previous Wednesday, Mr. Eden said: "In regard to the terms of the armistice, General Scobie had asked, that E.L.A.S. supporters in Athens and the Piræus must cease resistance and hand in their arms. He had not asked that E.L.A.S. supporters outside . . . should hand in their arms." Defining Government policy, Mr. Eden added that "they had not asked that the disarmament of the guerrilla bands outside the Athens area should be done otherwise than by agreement subsequent to the cessation of hostilities."

In your current issue you repeat what appears to be a serious misrepresentation of British policy without explanation or justification. But in view of Mr. Eden's statements, the responsibility for the shame and tragedy of the continued fighting in Athens clearly rests on the shoulders of the E.L.A.S. Surely those of us who sympathise with the demands of E.A.M. should be the first to bring this home to them.

HERBERT G. WOOD

52A, Linden Road,
Birmingham, 30.

SIR,—The fact is that we are now in Greece as conquerors, setting up a British puppet government. I get tired of the hypocrisy that pretends that we are only aiming at law and order in Athens or that the responsibility for the present tragedy can be attributed to the instability of Greek politics or the irresponsible elements in E.A.M. Outside England no one is deceived.

S. J. W.

SIR,—No one seems as yet to have asked whether the Caserta Agreement, by which E.A.M. engaged to place its forces under the Allied Command, can in effect be regarded as binding.

There has been no suggestion, official or otherwise, that our representatives first disclosed to the Greek leaders the terms of the plans laid down a month earlier at Teheran for the "occupation" (in Mr. Churchill's own words) of Athens to prevent a seizure of power by E.A.M. Can, in fact, the latter be envisaged as signing an agreement putting their forces technically at our mercy, if our plans against them had never been disclosed?

The question arises, therefore, whether the agreement was more than a trap. Further, can such an act be regarded as honourable on our part? And can the agreement be regarded as having at any time genuine validity? These questions gain added urgency, from the stress laid on this agreement by General Scobie as the source of our authority in Greece, and from the charges levelled at E.A.M. by British Cabinet Ministers, of having broken the agreement.

ERIC COOK

7a Fitzroy Square, W.1.

SIR,—An astounding statement by Mr. Eden in the second debate on Greece was that "Before the entry into Greece there was no issue which divided us from the Greek Government or *from any part of the Greek people*." This ignores more than a year of sharp controversy over the King's position, in which the greater part of the Greek people have certainly been Republican, while the British Government has appeared—as can easily be shown—to favour the King's restoration. On September 21, 1943, the *Times* remarked that "the return of the King without a popular vote could only lead to civil war"; but the King has never undertaken *not* to return without or before, such a vote. The "civil war" of to-day broke out largely because of the fear that he might return by invitation of a royalist or Metaxist government.

SEBASTIAN STAFFORD

SIR,—I am a regular reader and admirer of your paper, and so I feel compelled to send you some excerpts from a letter from my husband, who is serving in Greece at the moment. He is usually in agreement with your editorials, and this letter was in answer to one of mine in which I had been quoting your sentiments.

"I will try and explain in a few words . . . E.L.A.S., which is the fighting organisation of E.A.M., is very often represented as having fought guerrilla warfare against the Germans. That is the first mistake some of our foolish and misinformed M.P.s are making. Instead they hoarded arms of all types, some of which were sent by us, and, of course, when the time came, refused to hand them in. The reason, of course, being that they had used them to terrorise the population and needed them for their *coup d'état* which they started at the beginning of December. They are a small minority, but very well organised and have succeeded in holding down large areas by purely gangster and terrorist methods. They include quite a fair percentage of cut-throats, brigands

criminals and anarchists, who are only out for loot and plunder. It would do some of the folks at home good to have a look at them. They really are the dregs. Our position is unfortunate, but we can do no other than help the Greek Government. I must say we have a grand crowd of British troops here, who know their way around. There is certainly no nonsense about combating the 'Greek working man' and the 'friends of democracy,' as these rogues have been called.

"Food is rotting—such are the methods of E.L.A.S. to induce starvation, and then blame the British for it. From the start they have sabotaged all efforts to feed the population. The ships have been there, unable to unload because of E.L.A.S. terrorism against dock workers. There seems to be some doubt about British action here, at home, but there is none on the spot; the alternative would have been to stand by and see unparalleled massacre." SOLDIER'S WIFE

SIR,—This morning I received a letter from my younger son, who is an officer in the Indian Army (aged 21), and who has been fighting in Burma and Italy until now—to say that he is in Greece. This is what he says: "I'm now in Greece fighting someone but I don't know who! The people are all very nice and follow you all over the place. It was damn funny yesterday—we were going down the road and bullets were flying about—but in the middle of it all little boys were trying to shoe-shine."

SUBALTERN A.T.S.

SIR,—The fact that Mr. Eden said in the House of Commons that there is no political censorship on press messages from Athens means nothing. Similar statements have been made before about the Mediterranean theatre; and may well be made again. Let Mr. Hockler try to pass a political message through the Cairo censorship, whose trained personnel are presumably functioning in Athens, and see what happens to it. If it conflicts strongly with policy he will almost certainly be told: "It's hard to say where 'military' ends and 'political' begins," and that will be the end of him. If I've heard it once, I've heard it a score of times. And leopards, of course, don't change their spots. PHILIP JORDAN

SIR,—The distrust by E.L.A.S. of British interference is better understood if we examine the recent history of Cyprus. Let us start with Gladstone, father of English political morality, who once said, "the satisfaction I should feel, were it granted to me before the close of my long life, to see the population of that Hellenic island placed by friendly arrangement in organic union with their brethren of the Kingdom and Crete."

To his praise, it was Mr. Churchill who, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was able to end the annual levy of tribute. This had bled the Island white since its imposition by Disraeli in 1878, when we took over Cyprus on mortgage to pay the Sultan's debts. We declared the Island a British possession in 1914, but nothing was done to restore the economic position, e.g., the working man gets 2*s.* 6*d.* per 10 hour day. Finally, the people got restive in 1931 at the refusal of the Colonial Office to do anything, and burnt down the Governor's House in protest. Apart from a few minor incidents of sabotage, there was no destruction of property, and there were no attacks against officials, police or military.

We immediately landed troops who apparently could find no revolutionaries to shoot. So, £66,000 was imposed in fines, 2,000 people imprisoned, and some banished for life. The total population is 370,000. Trade Unions were made, and still are, illegal. All democratic institutions were abolished, and although local council elections were permitted, in 1943 for instance, the totalitarian character of the regime remains. Teaching of Greek history in the schools was prohibited. Not more than five persons are allowed to meet together without police permission. Even the picturesque painting of village carts blue and white was stopped. The people managed, however, to show their continued zeal for Democracy by providing a relief fund and volunteers for Spain.

Britain formed a Cyprus regiment in 1940, which attracted few recruits, although the pay was alluring, until the Axis attack on Greece. According to the records, the regiment distinguished itself in stubborn fighting at the historic Pass of Thermopylae, and lost 2,300 men. The Regiment again distinguished itself against Rommel's Afrika Corps. About 25,000 Cypriots are now fighting in the ranks of the United Nations; and some, must we admit, "formerly International Brigade," in E.L.A.S.

They desire:

(1) A fulfilment of Gladstone's hope.
(2) Freedom of speech and assembly.
(3) Unhampered elections, and restoration of the Legislative Council.
(4) A return of some of the tribute money to restore the natural prosperity of the Island by construction of water reservoirs, and afforestation, etc.

What a glorious opportunity for, must it be, the Colonial Office to demonstrate by a sort of Cypriot T.V.A. scheme, what English, Scottish, and even Irish technicians can do!

Your one-time tourist. AMBROSE APPELBE

POLITICS IN FRANCE

SIR,—Having recently returned from Southern France, may I make some comments on Mr. Raymond Mortimer's article?

(1) I agree that "the likelihood of a Communist France is extremely slight" in the immediate future. But from the article one might conclude that the essence of French political life is the rivalry of hopes and fears on this point. I found no evidence of this. In my contacts with various resistance groups I met plenty of Communists, but none of them were planning revolution. From the other side, apart from those who equate Liberal reforms with Communism, the only people who seriously feared a "Red putsch" were some F.F.I. organisers from the Basse-Alpes a week after liberation; they were still thinking in terms of the France of 1939, so completely had they been cut off from political reality.

(2) It is thus, I think, a complete misunderstanding of the purpose of the *Milices patriotiques* to associate them with revolution. As I saw them they were definitely a local "part-time" force for guard duties, prevention of sabotage, apprehension of stray Nazis and collaborators, etc. They released from such work the full-time F.F.I. for larger operations against the retreating Germans and later for incorporation in the regular army. When I left France sporadic shootings and sabotage attempts by ex-members of Darnand's *Milice* and the P.S.F. gangsters were taking place in many towns and villages, and some such Home Guard was clearly needed. But revolution? . . . I don't think so.

(3) Many Socialists were active in the illegal propaganda and military organisations of resistance—no Communist that I met denied this. But the Socialist *Party* was not a leading resistance body (at least in the South, and Mr. Mortimer says it seems like a "phantom" in Paris)—for two reasons: Firstly, in 1940, a large proportion (probably over 50 per cent.) of the Deputies and other leaders collaborated in one form or another, and the members were consequently confused and disorganised. Secondly, Socialists mainly worked in the resistance as individuals, and had not behind them the "closely knit organisation and experience in clandestine work" that enabled the Communists to make such a fine contribution. Thus it is that in all the areas I visited scattered groups of Socialists, many with heroic

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JONATHAN CAPE

personal records, were only beginning to reconstitute a party organisation and recruit members from the resistance. (The only exception I can give is Marseilles, where the Socialist Party, led by Max Juvenal, President of the Departmental Committee of Liberation, and Gaston Defferre, President of the Municipal Commission and since confirmed as Mayor, had maintained an organisation and prestige equal to that of the Communists).

(4) On Communist methods I will state only that I found no signs of the "influence of the Kremlin" which Mr. Mortimer so painstakingly exposes. A Party which since the days of the Popular Front has been propounding in various forms the "Union of all Patriotic Frenchmen" is scarcely likely to relapse into sterile isolation, much as its enemies would doubtless desire it. Mr. Mortimer apparently believes some unnamed "Russian" is instructing the French C.P. how to achieve their aim of a France "*forte et libre*," but to repeat such wild statements without evidence is surely only likely to assist their enemies and ours.

(5) De Gaulle's strength lies in his uncompromising hostility to the enemy and the collaborators, and in his insistence that his mandate derives from the people of France, and not from Allies or armies or exiles. If that remains his policy he will still be strong when Pierlots and Papandreous disappear, and may well become the first President of the Fourth Republic. Personally, I do not anticipate bitter party conflict in France in the near future, but rather the continuance of a coalition Government rather like the present one. A considerable shift of emphasis to the Left is, however likely, in accordance with the probable results of the Elections.

(6) Mr. Mortimer admits a short visit, a narrow circle of contacts and a confusing situation, but notes one *certainty*, "that the Communists are losing influence every day." I have been in a different area, and have perhaps met different types of people. I can only say that I think he is mistaken. (Or is it unkind to suggest that this opinion is an example of intuition at work and owes little to his visit to France?)

(7) In conclusion, my own experience bears out the view of your correspondent writing of Paris on October 14: "The general atmosphere of politics is immensely encouraging. . . . The French have learned tolerance for the first time in their political history. In every political party . . . one finds not merely declarations but real evidence of a determination to hold together at least until economic reconstruction is complete and France has been accepted everywhere as a great Power." And Mr. Mortimer, in the same issue, very wisely maintains that "we ought to avoid that pose of moral superiority to which we are so addicted, and to recognise that the French are entitled to clean their own country."

BRITISH OFFICER

[Mr. Mortimer writes: "'British Officer' suggests that my judgment of the political situation in France is based upon prejudice rather than upon experience. The history in paragraph 4 of his letter does not strike me as conspicuously objective, but I prefer to believe that the difference between his impressions and my own derives chiefly from the fact that he has been in the South, and I mainly in Paris. I hope he is right in prophesying 'a considerable shift of emphasis to the Left in the probable result of the Elections.' I am myself afraid of a shift to the Right. It appears that the Communist Party shares my pessimism, since they have opposed, unsuccessfully, the plan for holding municipal elections in the near future."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

THE HUNGARIAN PEASANTRY

SIR,—In an excellent review of Paloczi-Horvath's *In Darkest Hungary*, which appeared in your issue of December 23, Mr. Paul Ignotus disagrees with the author on the following points:

1. The peasants hardly knew what the Hungarian revolution of 1848 was about.

2. The leaders coming from peasant stock were the first to betray their socialist comrades to the white terrorists in 1919, or to appreciate the "Hitlerite version of socialism in the late thirties."

3. That the peasants have tolerated with "dull passivity" and practically without break for four centuries the rule of the oppressors, and he concludes that the picture of Hungary would not have been so dark had the peasants been as bright and "articulate" as Paloczi-Horvath depicts them.

I am sorry to have to contradict Mr. Ignotus, for whose knowledge of Hungarian affairs I have a true consideration, but I cannot share his derogatory views on the Hungarian peasantry.

Although many serfs in 1848 must have been ignorant about the political background of the rising for their liberation, the Hungarian lords, on the other hand, knew only too well why they were obliged to give them their freedom. *Not* on account of "a small group of intellectuals and shop assistants," but because of a fear of a peasant revolution. If this element of unrest and latent force had been non-existent the activities of the intellectuals would have been irrelevant and remained sterile. The peasant jacqueries in Galicia in 1846 were a timely warning to the landlords that the same might happen in Hungary.

That leaders drawn from the suppressed classes are prone to the temptation of betrayal is not confined to the Hungarian peasants alone. This has happened in many countries. But so far as betrayal is concerned, have not rather the peasants been betrayed by those who for saving the Social Democratic Party organisation and the Trade Unions signed an agreement with Count Bethlen in 1922 in which they promised to refrain from all activities amongst the four million landless agricultural labourers (52 per cent. of the population)? Although the excuse of the Social Democrats was a weighty one it does not alter the fact that the bargain was made at the expense of the peasantry. Mr. Ignotus also seems to forget those many nameless peasant martyrs who took part in the illegal communist movement between the two wars and were tortured to death by the fascist gendarmes.

As regards the peasants having submitted to the rule of their masters "with dull passivity and practically without a break for four centuries," the following historical facts speak for themselves:

In 1697 the Rakoczi revolution started with a peasant rising in Northern Hungary. Rakoczi comments in his diary: "The serfs robbed their own nobles. They arrested and killed those who refused to join them." Rakoczi heads this rising and fights the Habsburgs.

The 1848 revolution liberated *de jure* the serfs.

In 1906 the consequence of the widespread harvesters' strike was that the parliament passed the law declaring the agricultural strike a criminal offence.

In 1911 the peasant leader Andras Achim, who tried to organise the agricultural labourers, was murdered by the gentry. His murderers were acquitted.

In the course of history the subjugated classes have mostly been freed with the help of the élite. Few were the leaders recruited from their own class. The value of a nation greatly depends on the moral strength of this élite. In France the encyclopedists, in Russia the Dostoievskis, Tolstoys, Bakunins, and the *narodnikis* roused the conscience of the country. The responsibility is, therefore, on those who tolerated conditions as dark as they are in Hungary today and who, owing to their selfishness, incompetence and complacency, were unable to live up to their historical role. Is it, therefore, surprising that some of these forsaken peasants, the Cinderellas of East Europe, "appreciated" the Hitlerite demagogy, which promised them land? And is it not a proof that they are not as "passive" as Mr. Ignotus seems to believe? If there has been treason, it is that of "la trahison des clercs" which was nowhere so shameless and cynical as in the Hungary of the last twenty-five years. The main task of the present is to overcome the antagonism between the rural and urban population of East Europe instead of driving a wedge between them, and to atone for the sins committed against the Hungarian peasantry—instead of denouncing them.

CATHERINE ANDRASSY

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Our Economic Problems
and their Solution

Author of *Hopousia*

Something is wrong with our social and economic system. What economic structure should be substituted? The author considers that no revolution or any new "ism" is necessary. Nor does he subscribe to any of the multifarious "isms" that are urging their appeals in the world to-day. Rather does he advocate true democratic principles. He traces the social troubles of our economic system to their sources and exposes the fundamental causes. He suggests that the rejection of four fallacies in our economic system will help us build a saner and sounder structure. *8s. 6d. net*

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Imagine, then, what it is to give the story of France—an obscure, secret France, new to her friends, her enemies and above all, new to herself! France no longer has bread, wine, fire. But above all she no longer has any law. Civil disobedience, individual or organised rebellion, have become duties to the fatherland. The national hero is the undercoverman, the outlaw. He changes his domicile every week, every night. He lives under false names, false addresses, false faces. Officials, members of the police, help the rebel. He finds accomplices even in the Ministries. He violates regulations without giving it a thought. Prisons, executions, tortures, criminal attempts, surprise raids, flying bullets. . . . People die and kill with naturalness . . . the living France is all in the depths. It is towards the darkness that its true and unknown face is turned. In the catacombs of revolt the people are creating their own light and finding their own law.

These words were written by M. Joseph Kessel* in 1943, before France was freed, but events have strengthened their meaning. The phrase about the people finding their own light is now a familiar one; but it describes the most powerful of modern myths, and the politician who ignores it, belittles it or explains it away, fails in imagination and fails to grasp the historic moment. To imagine Europe—that is the hardest thing we have to do. The picture comes to us in fragments and to piece it together and above all hold it in the mind, is like trying to hold on to a dissolving dream and to preserve it from the obstinate platitude of our waking life. This war has been an incessant attack upon the imagination and memory of civilised man. It attacks by numbing. How can he convince himself that the Paris, the Vienna, the Prague he once knew, are now different places? How can he convince himself continually that torture, the concentration camp, espionage, treachery, murder and massacre, are now the natural elements of European life? The newspapers, the wireless, the film, bring this condition to our eyes, but the excess of horror leaves us with a declining power of reaction. And now the time of freedom approaches we cannot help trying to revive the past. We too have our sufferings. We have lived in a prison of grief listening to the wails from the opposite block across the courtyard, and we have sat divided between our rage, our pity and the continual petty estimate of our own chance of escape. Yet great as our suffering may have been it does not help us to imagine the condition of Europe, in the most important respect of all. We have had our land and our law to ourselves. Above all we have had our law. How easy to be stoical, orderly and assured of one another, when the basis of our lives has not been destroyed. It has not been our duty to destroy our own civilisation in order to save our souls; that has been the duty of the occupied countries.

Army of Shadows is a series of dramatic impressions or reports of the resistance movement in France. There are four major episodes or stories in which a number of characters reappear and these episodes are linked by the diary of one of the leaders. This diary makes the body of the book. Although they are true, the stories are so fantastic that, without the terrible sobriety of the diary, they would seem incredible to the reader. Few writers of thrillers have conceived a scene as tense, as horrifying and as fantastic as the one in which Gerbier, the diarist, escapes from his executioners. One simply gapes at it. Few stories of horror have given us a murder more real, seedy and sickening, than the strangling described in the second chapter of the book. Yet, as M. Kessel, the novelist, insists: this book is a document, a humble document and not a novel. Everything in it is true. Everything in it has been lived, from the tortures of Room 87 to Jean François's highly romantic discovery that the leader he is rowing out to the submarine, is his brother; from Mathilde's raid on the train to her appalling death when she has asked to be shot by her own friends. The only untruth in *Army of Shadows* is of the kind that security has required. Names were altered, people have been made unrecognisable. Things like their age, their gait, their status and occupation have been changed. Episodes have been reshuffled. Links between them have been suppressed. The human being in M. Kessel was saddened by seeing his friends dissolve under the alterations of his pen; the novelist feared these alterations, knowing perhaps how the altered character takes a heightened life of his own and performs acts of which the original was not capable. But the care which M. Kessel has brought to his narrative is an aspect of his gravity, intelligence and sensibility as a writer. He makes one tremble for his people from page to page, so tenderly are they observed; their adventures excite us, but the ring of truth adds a deeper emotion to our excitement. Their sincerity is overwhelming. We believe every word they say, washed though they are, by patriotism, from any saving stain of original sin.

Sleeplessness, hunger, homelessness, fear, continuous travelling on trains, were the ordinary condition of the lives of the men and women in the resistance movement. They knew they had torture to face if they were caught, and modern torture is scientific. They feared themselves more than they feared for themselves. They feared that they would fail to be hard enough. They feared not being cool enough to kill and not being strong enough to stand physical pain when the Gestapo inflicted it. They feared personal weakness; the love of their families, the pity of the sick, which might lead them for a moment to forget their cause. They had discovered hatred and went on their missions exalted by their discovery. The Germans have praised "hardness" and have organised the inhuman qualities of man; they cannot have reckoned with the ferocity of people who have once been free or the hatred of those who have seen their civilisation plundered and degraded. For these people have to prove something: that they are superior to their blank-eyed conquerors, that the gentle are superior to the brute. And indeed, M. Kessel remarks, the gentle, tender and retiring man quickly became the cold fanatic, while the more robust sort acquired tenderness. The quiet innkeeper opens the trap door under his German customer who breaks his neck in the cellar; and then acquires a taste for this trick until his cellar is full. The postman and harness-maker beg permission to join the ambush. Mathilde the housewife, and mother of six children, becomes one of the leaders. She does not hesitate to shoot an informer. Gerbier hesitates when he sees the mole on the neck of the man he is strangling: "because of this little spot the flesh that surrounded it seemed more living, more tender, more vulnerable, like a bit of childhood. And Gerbier feels that this flesh is not capable of enduring one ounce of suffering. By this flesh Dounat's treason becomes innocent." But, as he hesitates, Gerbier also sees in that innocent mole another vulnerability. This mole, this man has betrayed once. Inevitably he will betray again. Yet before he kills the man, Gerbier feels obliged to say in his ear, "I swear to you, old man, you won't feel any pain."

Later on, in another episode, when the postman and his friend have shot the two German officers, they admire the self-possession of the Germans. When the civilised man is defending his standards, his habit of mind and his liberty, he derives no personal satisfaction from killing; he kills with only a part of himself. He has his civilisation, still, inside him. The old morality of honour is revived in these medieval times; for in their meetings, discussing their great losses, the inhuman strain of the outlaw's life, and—as it seems to them—the pitifully small results they achieve, they still conclude that the struggle must go on. One cannot allow the enemy to ridicule one's hate. The Royalist Baron says "Je préfère une France rouge à une France qui rougisse." But the real reason is that the Résistance has become a rebirth, a way of life, a faith which can no longer be controlled by the weariness of leaders or the success of executioners.

Gerbier's diary contains the plots of dozens of short stories. Here are one or two of them:

> L., who is in General de Gaulle's organisation, has arrived from London. This is his fifth trip. He had had a pile of work before leaving. Two sleepless nights. The plane trip. Parachute. Twelve kilometres on foot. The train in the early dawn. Falls asleep. His head bumping hard against his neighbour he wakes up. He thinks he is in England. He says "Oh I'm so sorry." He rubs his eyes. His neighbour was a German officer. No serious consequences.

The child of a dressmaker, a boy of twelve, is employed as a page boy at an hotel. At night he has nightmares and calls out things like "Don't hurt her . . . Don't kill her . . ." It appears he has seen people taken into a room at the hotel and has heard horrible cries come out of it. It is the town's torture chamber. The child says: "I didn't want to talk to anybody about it because I'm afraid to think about it." And now for the double turn of the screw:

> The following day Mathilde asked what advice I would have given the dressmaker about her son.
>
> "Why, to take him away from the hotel right away," I said.
>
> "Well, I persuaded her to let him stay on," said Mathilde. "It is so valuable to have a spy in such a place. Especially an innocent one."
>
> Mathilde's lips contracted and she gave me a sad, questioning look. I was forced to tell her she was right.

(Mathilde's death, at the end of the book, is brought upon her by her passionate devotion to one of her daughters.)

> There was in the same camp a section for communists. They were, as always, treated in a particularly appalling way. Somehow a few of them managed to escape. Three days later they came back and gave themselves up again. They had escaped without the party's authorisation. The party was sending them back to the camp. . . . I do not know of a man in the resistance who does not speak of the communists with a special quality in his voice and expression, a deeper gravity.

Again:

> This morning, which was a Sunday morning, I had a great fright. A German military car stopped opposite our house and a Kommandant got out. I was standing at the window. (I spend a good part of the day at this post, being unable to go out.) And although I was hidden by a curtain I was taken aback for a moment. X's son, who was playing in the room, glanced into the street. "It's nothing," he said to me. "The Kommandant of the region comes to the corner bistro every Sunday. He thinks they have the best brandy in the region. If you just look a little you'll have a good laugh. We'll spy together." The child had a secretive air. At the end of an hour I saw the Kommandant go out into the yard of the café and roll in a pile of manure. "That isn't the Boche," the boy told me then triumphantly. "This is what happens. The Kommandant drinks a bottle of brandy. When he is good and drunk he insists on changing clothes with the bistro-keeper. And the disgusted bistro-keeper goes and dirties the Boche uniform in the manure." The child was laughing inaudibly, and at first I did likewise. But then I began to wonder if at heart the Kommandant did not hate his uniform and if, liberated by the influence of alcohol, he was not simply resorting to a proxy to have it covered with filth.

I have two criticisms to make of this remarkable book. The first is that a writer as talented as M. Kessel deserved a faultless translation and he has not had it. Small mistakes irritate the reader. We do not call a "curé" a curate; we are waited on by "footmen," are served by "butlers," but not by "valets"; we say "searchlights" not "projectors." The second criticism I make with less pedantry and more diffidence. The one character who somehow does not quite come off is "Saint Luc," the mysterious leader. In underground organisations the leader must indeed be a mystery. He will also be a hero and a legend; even—so mystical is the spirit of secret societies—a kind of saint. And so M. Kessel

* *Army of Shadows*. By Joseph Kessel. Translated by Haakon Chevalier. *Cresset Press*. 7s. 6d.

personal records, were only beginning to reconstitute a party organisation and recruit members from the resistance. (The only exception I can give is Marseilles, where the Socialist Party, led by Max Juvenal, President of the Departmental Committee of Liberation, and Gaston Defferre, President of the Municipal Commission and since confirmed as Mayor, had maintained an organisation and prestige equal to that of the Communists).

(4) On Communist methods I will state only that I found no signs of the "influence of the Kremlin" which Mr. Mortimer so painstakingly exposes. A Party which since the days of the Popular Front has been propounding in various forms the "Union of all Patriotic Frenchmen" is scarcely likely to relapse into sterile isolation, much as its enemies would doubtless desire it. Mr. Mortimer apparently believes some unnamed "Russian" is instructing the French C.P. how to achieve their aim of a France "*forte et libre*," but to repeat such wild statements without evidence is surely only likely to assist their enemies and ours.

(5) De Gaulle's strength lies in his uncompromising hostility to the enemy and the collaborators, and in his insistence that his mandate derives from the people of France, and not from Allies or armies or exiles. If that remains his policy he will still be strong when Pierlots and Papandreous disappear, and may well become the first President of the Fourth Republic. Personally, I do not anticipate bitter party conflict in France in the near future, but rather the continuance of a coalition Government rather like the present one. A considerable shift of emphasis to the Left is, however likely, in accordance with the probable results of the Elections.

(6) Mr. Mortimer admits a short visit, a narrow circle of contacts and a confusing situation, but notes one *certainty*, "that the Communists are losing influence every day." I have been in a different area, and have perhaps met different types of people. I can only say that I think he is mistaken. (Or is it unkind to suggest that this opinion is an example of intuition at work and owes little to his visit to France?)

(7) In conclusion, my own experience bears out the view of your correspondent writing of Paris on October 14: "The general atmosphere of politics is immensely encouraging. . . . The French have learned tolerance for the first time in their political history. In every political party . . . one finds not merely declarations but real evidence of a determination to hold together at least until economic reconstruction is complete and France has been accepted everywhere as a great Power." And Mr. Mortimer, in the same issue, very wisely maintains that "we ought to avoid that pose of moral superiority to which we are so addicted, and to recognise that the French are entitled to clean their own country."

BRITISH OFFICER

[Mr. Mortimer writes: "'British Officer' suggests that my judgment of the political situation in France is based upon prejudice rather than upon experience. The history in paragraph 4 of his letter does not strike me as conspicuously objective, but I prefer to believe that the difference between his impressions and my own derives chiefly from the fact that he has been in the South, and I mainly in Paris. I hope he is right in prophesying 'a considerable shift of emphasis to the Left in the probable result of the Elections.' I am myself afraid of a shift to the Right. It appears that the Communist Party shares my pessimism, since they have opposed, unsuccessfully, the plan for holding municipal elections in the near future."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

THE HUNGARIAN PEASANTRY

SIR,—In an excellent review of Paloczi-Horvath's *In Darkest Hungary*, which appeared in your issue of December 23, Mr. Paul Ignotus disagrees with the author on the following points:

1. The peasants hardly knew what the Hungarian revolution of 1848 was about.

2. The leaders coming from peasant stock were the first to betray their socialist comrades to the white terrorists in 1919, or to appreciate the "Hitlerite version of socialism in the late thirties."

3. That the peasants have tolerated with "dull passivity" and practically without break for four centuries the rule of the oppressors, and he concludes that the picture of Hungary would not have been so dark had the peasants been as bright and "articulate" as Paloczi-Horvath depicts them.

I am sorry to have to contradict Mr. Ignotus, for whose knowledge of Hungarian affairs I have a true consideration, but I cannot share his derogatory views on the Hungarian peasantry.

Although many serfs in 1848 must have been ignorant about the political background of the rising for their liberation, the Hungarian lords, on the other hand, knew only too well why they were obliged to give them their freedom. *Not* on account of "a small group of intellectuals and shop assistants," but because of a fear of a peasant revolution. If this element of unrest and latent force had been non-existent the activities of the intellectuals would have been irrelevant and remained sterile. The peasant jacqueries in Galicia in 1846 were a timely warning to the landlords that the same might happen in Hungary.

That leaders drawn from the suppressed classes are prone to the temptation of betrayal is not confined to the Hungarian peasants alone. This has happened in many countries. But so far as betrayal is concerned, have not rather the peasants been betrayed by those who for saving the Social Democratic Party organisation and the Trade Unions signed an agreement with Count Bethlen in 1922 in which they promised to refrain from all activities amongst the four million landless agricultural labourers (52 per cent. of the population)? Although the excuse of the Social Democrats was a weighty one it does not alter the fact that the bargain was made at the expense of the peasantry. Mr. Ignotus also seems to forget those many nameless peasant martyrs who took part in the illegal communist movement between the two wars and were tortured to death by the fascist gendarmes.

As regards the peasants having submitted to the rule of their masters "with dull passivity and practically without a break for four centuries," the following historical facts speak for themselves:

In 1697 the Rakoczi revolution started with a peasant rising in Northern Hungary. Rakoczi comments in his diary: "The serfs robbed their own nobles. They arrested and killed those who refused to join them." Rakoczi heads this rising and fights the Habsburgs.

The 1848 revolution liberated *de jure* the serfs.

In 1906 the consequence of the widespread harvesters' strike was that the parliament passed the law declaring the agricultural strike a criminal offence.

In 1911 the peasant leader Andras Achim, who tried to organise the agricultural labourers, was murdered by the gentry. His murderers were acquitted.

In the course of history the subjugated classes have mostly been freed with the help of the élite. Few were the leaders recruited from their own class. The value of a nation greatly depends on the moral strength of this élite. In France the encyclopedists, in Russia the Dostoievskis, Tolstoys, Bakunins, and the *narodnikis* roused the conscience of the country. The responsibility is, therefore, on those who tolerated conditions as dark as they are in Hungary today and who, owing to their selfishness, incompetence and complacency, were unable to live up to their historical role. Is it, therefore, surprising that some of these forsaken peasants, the Cinderellas of East Europe, "appreciated" the Hitlerite demagogy, which promised them land? And is it not a proof that they are not as "passive" as Mr. Ignotus seems to believe? If there has been treason, it is that of "la trahison des clercs" which was nowhere so shameless and cynical as in the Hungary of the last twenty-five years. The main task of the present is to overcome the antagonism between the rural and urban population of East Europe instead of driving a wedge between them, and to atone for the sins committed against the Hungarian peasantry—instead of denouncing them.

CATHERINE ANDRASSY

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and their Solution

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"Well, I persuaded her to let him stay on," said Mathilde. "It is so valuable to have a spy in such a place. Especially an innocent one."

Mathilde's lips contracted and she gave me a sad, questioning look. I was forced to tell her she was right.

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There was in the same camp a section for communists. They were, as always, treated in a particularly appalling way. Somehow a few of them managed to escape. Three days later they came back and gave themselves up again. They had escaped without the party's authorisation. The party was sending them back to the camp. . . . I do not know of a man in the resistance who does not speak of the communists with a special quality in his voice and expression, a deeper gravity.

Again:

This morning, which was a Sunday morning, I had a great fright. A German military car stopped opposite our house and a Kommandant got out. I was standing at the window. (I spend a good part of the day at this post, being unable to go out.) And although I was hidden by a curtain I was taken aback for a moment. X's son, who was playing in the room, glanced into the street. "It's nothing," he said to me. "The Kommandant of the region comes to the corner bistro every Sunday. He thinks they have the best brandy in the region. If you just look a little you'll have a good laugh. We'll spy together." The child had a secretive air. At the end of an hour I saw the Kommandant go out into the yard of the café and roll in a pile of manure. "That isn't the Boche," the boy told me then triumphantly. "This is what happens. The Kommandant drinks a bottle of brandy. When he is good and drunk he insists on changing clothes with the bistro-keeper. And the disgusted bistro-keeper goes and dirties the Boche uniform in the manure." The child was laughing inaudibly, and at first I did likewise. But then I began to wonder if at heart the Kommandant did not hate his uniform and, liberated by the influence of alcohol, he was not simply resorting to a proxy to have it covered with filth.

I have two criticisms to make of this remarkable book. The first is that a writer as talented as M. Kessel deserved a faultless translation and he has not had it. Small mistakes irritate the reader. We do not call a "curé" a curate; we are waited on by "footmen," are served by "butlers," but not by "valets"; we say "searchlights" not "projectors." The second criticism I make with less pedantry and more diffidence. The one character who somehow does not quite come off is "Saint Luc," the mysterious leader. In underground organisations the leader must indeed be a mystery. He will also be a hero and a legend; even—so mystical is the spirit of secret societies—a kind of saint. And so M. Kessel

* *Army of Shadows*. By Joseph Kessel. Translated by Haakon Chevalier. *Cresset Press*. 7s. 6d.

draws him as the magic shadow. In doing so he has drawn a subjective portrait, where the rest are hard and real to the eye. Saint Luc has the delightful but unsatisfying infallibility of the master spy. He is another Prince Florizel, without the glitter, and in fact sombre and melancholy in his visits, but with the same too noiseless ubiquity. He introduces just that note of illusion which the terrible circumstances do not demand. But having said that, I have said all. To imagine France again, to know that it cannot be the France we remember; from now on to imagine the underground life of Europe with its face turned to the dark and the faith that it has seen there, we need to read a book like this, the work of a thoughtful writer who is fascinated by the conflicts that attend the de-civilisation of man.

V. S. PRITCHETT.

HAROLD NICOLSON

Friday Mornings. By HAROLD NICOLSON. *Constable.* 8s. 6d.

This book consists of a selection from the weekly articles contributed by Harold Nicolson to the *Spectator* between 1941 and 1944. The selection covers a variety of topics from British versus German Humour to the House of Commons in War and from Shakespeare's Flowers to Fire-watching. Week by week Mr. Nicolson has extracted the essence from contemporary events and personalities, passed them through the alembic of his mind and then distilled them on to the *Spectator's* page, where they appear no longer as raw happenings or crude people, but as the progeny of a civilised and sensitive personality which has been impregnated—violated would seem at times to be the better word—by the contemporary historical process. In effect Mr. Nicolson's function has been to turn events into prose.

The articles convey an admirable effect of ease, Mr. Nicolson being so completely master of his style that he can afford to be at play with it. It is a mannered style, gay and vigorous, but sophisticated. "Urbane" is the epithet that springs most naturally to the mind. I venture in passing to doubt whether Mr. Nicolson would ever permit himself to use the epithet which springs most naturally to the mind; nevertheless, "urbane" I insist it is, and in the most literal sense of the word. Speaking of Mozart's music, somebody once pointed out that, unlike that of Haydn and Beethoven, it is wholly of the town; never for a moment does it suggest that there is also the country. Despite a piece on Shakespeare's Flowers and an essay on Homer As A Poet of Nature, one gets the same impression, an impression of a predominantly urban polish from Mr. Nicolson. His sentences, moreover, are exquisitely formed; his words are always right. He is moved by an impulse to turn over on his pen and savour individual phrases as a woman handles stuffs on a littered and tangled counter. Thus we hear of the "glum selfishness" of our Home Office compared with the generosity of the Swedes in the matter of the reception of Danish refugees; of the "tautening of the muscles" of the adolescent mind by the difficulty of learning Latin and Greek; of that "trying luxury" the Public School; of Miss Rathbone's "voracious championship of the forgotten and oppressed"; of Sir Stafford Cripps's "tetchy rebuke" to the members of the House of Commons, and of Edwin Lutyens' eyes of "unbelievable innocence." Sometimes one can see the process at work as Mr. Nicolson visibly feels for his phrases. Take, for example, the following passage on the appearance of Stresemann, one of a number of exquisitely painted physical portraits:

> One would sit there, wondering what epithet could apply to the impression of sinuosity which he produced. "Feline?"—no, he was too jovial to be feline; "reptilian?"—no, he was far too fine for that; the impression rather was that of a bull-terrier which suddenly adopts the stalking position and becomes live and tense.

"One would sit there wondering what epithet could apply!" Quite so, and if one were to venture a criticism it is that the interest in how to say it, nay more, the determination to say it differently, sometimes take precedence over the thing said, so that the style ceases to be the vehicle in which the wares are taken to market and becomes the wares themselves. More specifically, the manner degenerates on occasion into mannerism, the wit softens into whimsy while the fancy wanders off into fantasy. Here, for example, are three phrases taken from the first paragraph of an admirable essay on "Oxford and the Younger Generation." "In other towns some glow-worm lamp does at least reflect a pin-point on the pavement, indicating where the way to Grimsby cuts the Great North Road." For a moment I thought that this was an obscure Oxford thrust at Cambridge; on reflection I remembered that Cambridge has mercifully escaped the embraces of the Great North Road, and I decided that it is merely a whimsical way of referring to the point with which a branch road leaves a main road. "A distant light, with brown paper tied around it, indicates the wicket at which the collector received the little squares of cardboard which we thrust into her hand." This is apparently only a mannered way of referring to the gate at which you give up your tickets. "The rain ceases to fall downwards but creeps sideways and upwards from the streets." Does it? —even at Oxford?

Only, I take it, if it is surrealist rain, and I cannot deny myself the pleasure of begging Mr. Nicolson, whose works I deeply admire, not to depreciate his prose by preciousness. For, indeed, his style is in general as flexible and effective an instrument as that of any critic now writing. It is capable of an enchanting lightness as in the essay in which the word "Loophole" appears as "Lowoffoly"; of rising, when the theme demands, as, for example, in the essay on the Persecution of the Jews, to the height of a noble eloquence, while every now and then it breaks out, as in his epitaph on Sidney Keyes, in sentences and phrases so wholly right and lovely that their appositeness sends a little thrill of pleasure down the spine. "A man of his intellect, a man of his poetic certainty, might have pierced the cloud of uselessness which keeps the sunshine from our younger men."

I hope I have conveyed the impression that Mr. Nicolson is immensely readable. Let me add that he is also righteous. Indeed, he performs one of the most difficult of literary feats, that of making righteousness readable. There is a sense in which truth and decency are unanimous—there is only one way of getting a sum right, an infinite number of getting it wrong—while prejudices, passions, dogmas, intensely held creeds and fanatical partisanships are various and, because various, contradictory. Thus, while the uncivilised concur, when they do, owing to an accidental coincidence of interests, the civilised, other things being equal, tend to agree, to agree, for example, that Camembert is better than Cheddar, Shakespeare is a better writer than Norma Lorrimer, the music of Beethoven than the music of Sinatra. And so it turns out that when one reads Mr. Nicolson, there are few of his judgments with which one finds oneself wishing to dissent, while the process of one's reading is accompanied by a subdued chorus of "hear hears." He is, for example, right almost as it were by instinct, although he instinctively uses his reason to justify his instinct on such subjects as the withdrawal from use by A.B.C.A. of the pamphlet written by Sir William Beveridge of his report; on the truth that "Cruelty is the greatest of all our enemies"; on the Persecution of the Jews—he is very moving about this—or the attitude of the younger generation to the principles of democracy as expressed in the proceedings of the House of Commons. It is, he points out, in the very ordinariness of members that their value lies. A constitutional statesman should be a man of common opinions but uncommon abilities. Now who shall say that through these last years the views, wishes, hopes and fears of the House of Commons have not by and large represented those of most of the people?

Mr. Nicolson maintains that major works of art are more important than some human lives, even those of one's sons; I agree; that it is a reproach to democracy and education in England and America that most of our fellow countrymen do not agree; I agree again; that one of the unconsidered arguments in favour of the bombing of German cities is that suffering has helped to assuage the German sense of guilt—ingenious but doubtful; that the number and variety of English flowers has increased since Shakespeare's days—agreeable and true; that the public schools teach the virtues of humility and tolerance—very nice if it were true, but it isn't. You will see from what I have said that this is a book to read, to buy and to give.

C. E. M. JOAD

SOVIET DIPLOMAT

Maxim Litvinoff. By ARTHUR UPHAM POPE. *Secker and Warburg.* 18s.

This responsible and detailed biography of the foremost Soviet diplomat will probably become one of the standard books on the foreign policy, not merely of the U.S.S.R. but also of the whole of Europe. Mr. Pope's method of introducing long historical and political discussions into the framework of Litvinoff's career enables him to give a picture of the role played by the Soviet Union in world politics which is as vivid and internally consistent as any I have yet read. Although the story of capitalist Europe's hostility, its suspicion and humiliation of Soviet Russia is now painfully familiar, told from this new angle it is by no means one of unrelieved tragedy. For the struggle Litvinoff made, first to establish normal diplomatic relations between his country and other nations, and, later, to organise collective security against aggression, has something of an epic character about it. Mr. Pope is able—and this, I believe, is the test of any biography—to identify the reader emotionally with Litvinoff's successes and failures.

His treatment of Litvinoff's early life follows a pattern familiar to those who have read memoirs or biographies of any of the other Bolshevik leaders. Escapes from jail, the break with home after the decision to become a professional revolutionary has been made, the pogroms in Belostok where Meer Wallach, the Jewish boy who became the revolutionary Litvinoff, was born; all these went to the making of the man who obtained his discharge from the army rather than shoot striking workers, of the Litvinoff who went to Geneva, trying to establish contact with Lenin and for years afterwards organised the shipment of arms and illegal literature into Russia. Mr. Pope describes the development of the Russian revolutionary movement in detail and sympathetically illustrates the futility of the Tsarist system with some quotations from the diary Nicholas kept right up to the Revolution:

> To-day I had a bad hangover, because we drank for two days and I personally drank myself into a complete stupor.
>
> Walked a long way and killed two crows, drank tea by daylight.

These were all that was entered on two separate days.

Just before the last war, Litvinoff came to London where he was naturalised and worked as a clerk in a publishers. At the same time he was taking a leading part in the work of the Bolsheviks. I wonder if to-day, as he reads the news reports from Athens, he remembers his wedding in 1915 at Hampstead Town Hall to Ivy Low? The chief witness was a young Foreign Office official who was taking Russian lessons with Litvinoff and who had introduced the couple. His name was Rex Leeper, now British Ambassador to King George of the Hellenes. Litvinoff must have many ironic memories of this sort. He was appointed, for instance, as chairman of the Committee on Seaweeds of the League.

After the Revolution, Litvinoff became the

chief representative of the Soviet Union abroad. Until May, 1939, when he resigned, Litvinoff went to conferences and to foreign offices to fight for trade agreements, then recognition, then treaties. He was snubbed, of course. But when the time came for his last desperate fight to avert war, he had achieved very considerable successes for the Soviet Government. Mr. Pope has very sensibly included verbatim reports of the important speeches Litvinoff made before the League. Reading them through for the first time since the early months of the war, I was struck by their force and clarity. There is ample warning in them of the 1939 pact with Ribbentrop, though Litvinoff could not himself be a party to it. He had to wait until war had brought the alliance he sought to make. Then he emerged from his retirement to start again his job of "interpreting my country to the West—and the West to my country."

Litvinoff's "western" background has played an important part in his life. More than any other Soviet leader he understands the traditions and outlook of bourgeois democracies. He speaks their languages and has lived in them. And unlike the other émigrés, Zinovieff, Kameneff and Bukharin, he never became a "world-revolutionary." It was in Russia he wanted to make a revolution. And he has devoted his life to securing and consolidating it. Though he himself deprecates giving individuals credit for diplomatic or political successes there can be little doubt that Litvinoff's personality did much to bridge the gulf between Russia and the West. Never, says Mr. Pope,

> has there been any feeling of tension or bitterness or hint of trickery or bad faith in his dealings. His tranquil detachment, complete freedom from anxiety, his ready laughter and his deliciously ironic wit have all helped. He has invariably been confident, conciliatory, unhurried, cool . . .

Besides reviewing the Munich crisis in detail, with considerable emphasis on Soviet reactions to it, Mr. Pope produces some strange stories of that period which I hesitate to accept without further confirmation. He says, for instance, that Ribbentrop took with him to Moscow, in 1939, dictaphone records of a conversation between Hitler and Chamberlain in which the Prime Minister was urging war against Stalin; that Chamberlain only began to study *excerpts* from *Mein Kampf* after Munich! And that in 1935 Chamberlain was not anti-Soviet but only became so under pressure from Sir Horace Wilson and others, who, Mr. Pope alleges, supplied Chamberlain with "documents" about Russian military strength which came directly or indirectly from Ribbentrop who had secured them from (he said) the Polish Intelligence. According to Mr. Pope, they turned out to be forgeries.

Mr. Pope, who is a balanced and astringent commentator, has made his narrative enthralling and instructive and a striking endorsement of Soviet foreign policy in the 'Thirties from an independent source. It is useful for us to be warned of the rocks on which the League foundered at the moment we are witnessing the birth of its successor. I can imagine no one who reads this book failing to appreciate the immense stature both of Maxim Litvinoff and the policy of indivisible peace for which he fought—and is, I am sure, still working.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

THE OUTWARD EYE

The Poet's Eye. Chosen by GEOFFREY GRIGSON. Lithographs by JOHN CRAXTON. *Muller.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The full title is *Visionary Poems and Passages or the Poet's Eye*, and instead of an Introduction Mr. Grigson gives us an Explanation. By "visionary" he means, not seeing beyond, but seeing, shall we say, with depth. Thus many of his chosen passages in verse and prose are descriptions of nature; what brings them together is the pictorial method, to which imagination has been added. "Visionary," I should think, is hardly the word for Crabbe, one of the most quoted writers here. However, there's no harm in Mr. Grigson having his fling. His Explanation is pretty and incisive: a hint of the skirmishing ex-editor of *New Verse*, rather lost lately among the by-ways of respectability. He has taken to writing verse seriously himself, to showing an unexpected fondness for wild flowers. The taste revealed by his anthology is for the natural rather than the hot-house plants of literature, and very agreeable I find it. None of these products—even the few that have been often looked at and admired—seem destined for the flower-show. And he has made discoveries.

First, discoveries among the known. Though not long ago I re-read a good deal of Crabbe, this passage on the turkey—and how delightful it is!—escaped my attention:

> He moves about, as ship prepared to sail,
> He hoists his proud rotundity of tail,
> The half-sealed eyes and changeful neck he shows,
> Where, in its quick'ning colours, vengeance glows;
> From red to blue the pendant wattles turn,
> Blue mix'd with red, as matches when they burn;
> And thus th' intruding snarler to oppose,
> Urged by enkindling wrath, he gobbling goes . . .

Among portraits of the turkey, Jules Renard's eighteenth-century dame and D. H. Lawrence's slag-wattled Indian are not more startlingly in character. The other passages from Crabbe, pleasantly varied, convey sea-nettles, parkland, fen, midnight, a proposal of marriage; one song and the beginning of a tale help to destroy the usual idea of a crabbed, drab writer. He is both more cheerful and wittier than his reputation; botanises too much, and yet that is half his charm; while his sharp understanding of people captured Jane Austen. The botanising, as it happens, isn't out of place in Mr. Grigson's anthology, for he has a leaning that way himself. The notebooks of Hopkins, Tennyson, Clare, Coleridge, Samuel Palmer and Whitman provide him with sketches from life, so curious and satisfying sometimes that one doesn't regard them as material for poems. The single quotation from Coleridge is in prose:

> Dec. 15, 1804. Saw the limb of a rainbow footing itself on the sea at a small apparent distance from the shore, a thing of itself—no substrate cloud or even mist visible—but the distance glimmered through it as through a thin semi-transparent hoop.

This sentence, faultless of its kind, is placed between a brooding passage from *The Excursion* and George Herbert's *The Flower*: the loftiness of the first, the shining devotion of the second, take away nothing from Coleridge's rainbow. It is the secret of a good anthology that every item should be complete and yet in tune, that the arrangement should never prompt one to say "This is better (or worse) than that." Enjoying *The Poet's Eye*, one doesn't stop to wish that there were more Herbert, a far greater poet than, for example, William Barnes who, with Crabbe, helps to give this collection its flavour. I don't take to all the Barnes poems, but several are printed for the first time, including the freshly charming *Troubles of the Day*. Here is its first verse:

> As there, along the elmy hedge I go
> By banksides white with parsley—parsley-bloom—
> Where smell of new-mown hay comes wafted by
> On wind of dewy evening, evening gloom,
> And homeward take my shaded way between
> The hedge's high-tipped wood, and barley green,
> I sing, or mean,
> "O troubles of the day. Flee to the west,
> Come not my homeward way. I seek my rest."

Mr. Grigson has rescued this from the files of the *Dorset County Chronicle*. Hardly less recondite,

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and satisfactory in the finding, are the passage from Melville's *Clarel*, Lord de Tabley's Pastoral after a Venetian painting, and Urquhart's Rabelaisian malediction in rhyme. He has succeeded, too, where many editors have failed, in getting a poem from Mr. Norman Cameron: one of those rare pieces that seem to have substituted for seventeenth-century wit an emblematic gravity. There are, by the way, few poems by living writers.

If I haven't conveyed already the flavour of Mr. Grigson's anthology—its taste for the illuminated and pictorial, its avoidance of accepted beauties—there is little more that quotation can do. His favourite sources (besides those already mentioned) are Dryden, R. W. Dixon, Coventry Patmore, Whitman, Wordsworth and Hardy: a glance at the index will discover plenty of surprises—the absence of Shakespeare, for example. Landscapes, Arcadia, a few love scenes and satirical portraits, nature seen through religion, some happy minutiae of description—that seems roughly to cover the field. The successes with the lesser and lesser-known poets give the collection its charm. It is a little difficult to know why Mr. Grigson should also have included some famous passages which everyone who buys the book will know already. "In the worst inn's worst room . . ." might perhaps be admitted for the sake of its approximation to Crabbe. But why bracket with four other fragments from Milton, "Now came still Ev'ning on . . ."? I suppose the Moon, the excuse for this, is in the fragments, as for Chehov it was in the bottle-glass on the wall; but I can't feel that this impressionist treatment of Milton is a good idea. However, it's a small point. More embarrassing, for me, are the book's illustrations. A few of Mr. Craxton's woodlands are pretty; but the modish repetition of horror, of valleys of dry bones and trees with pudgy faces, seems peculiarly unsuited to the text. Mr. Grigson, who has something to say on the subject of eyes, is silent about Mr. Craxton's.

G. W. STONIER

Lend-Lease. By E. R. STETTINIUS. *Macmillan.* 18*s.*

Nothing, it is to be feared, will convince the British public that finance is anything but a dull subject: and the British public has always regarded Lend-Lease as a matter primarily of finance. Rightly or wrongly, the man in the street always took it for granted that the immense resources of the U.S.A. would be at our disposal if we could pay for them. Towards the end of 1940 it became quite certain that we could not pay cash: Lend-Lease assured us that the American arsenal would, nevertheless, remain available. Without it we could not have carried on, and it was appreciated accordingly. Mr. Stettinius draws the attention of, primarily, the American reader to the other aspect of Lend-Lease: the evolution of supply among the United Nations as a combined operation of war. It is a far cry from "Cash and Carry," which on November, 1939, replaced the arms embargo provisions of the U.S. Neutrality Act, to the Combined Boards which now allocate food, raw materials, manufactures, munitions and shipping among the United Nations on a basis of reciprocal aid. But the evolution has been natural. It is very difficult for any nation, perhaps most of all for a democratic one, to accept the necessity of fighting before it becomes immediate and inescapable. Certainly we in this country, proud though we may be of the year during which we fought almost alone, should from our own previous hesitations understand those of others. The Lend-Lease Act finally recognised the defence of the various countries threatened or attacked by aggressors as "vital to the defence of the United States;" as the logic of events pressed them ever forward, the U.S.A. advanced step by step into the "shooting" aspect of a war which had long been, in fact, their own. In all this Mr. Stettinius played an outstanding part. As member of the Defence Advisory Commission from its inception in May, 1940, he was one of those mainly responsible for the development of United States production to meet her own and our requirements: he was Lend-Lease Administrator from August, 1941, to September, 1943, during which period the present structure of mutual aid was built up and the stream of supplies became a torrent. He tells the story, in all its diverse aspects, graphically and enthusiastically. Mr. Stettinius is a believer in international co-operation, now and in the peace. He shows the magnitude of its achievements in this particular field, the great part played by his own country and the great return received by the U.S.A. for their contribution.

Nine Drawings by Vicky. Introduced by MULK RAJ ANAND. 5*s.*

Vicky's drawing of famine in India entitled "Children of the Empire" (which first appeared in the *News Chronicle*) is the frontispiece of this truthful and terrible reminder of how a considerable section of the King's Indian subjects live and die. The naked child who sits on the edge of the pavement ("There was a child went forth") haunts one as no doubt it haunts Mr. Amery, for he would not wish Indian or any other children of the Empire to go forth like this one. The quotations and parodies of Kipling and other writers which go with Vicky's pictures could be more bitter than they are without missing their mark. Mulk Anand, in a restrained introduction, even ends with a note of hope.

Common Man and Colonel Bogey. By MICHAEL BARSLEY. *Pilot Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Ritzkrieg, the first of Michael Barsley's war satires, made its first appearance, unless we are mistaken, in the columns of this journal during the great London Blitz. Mr. Barsley then relied for much of his wit on an eccentric form of pun, which sometimes came off brilliantly and sometimes would have come off better if it had not been so often expected. In this, the third of the trilogy, the puns are less frequent and the satire also less savage. The adventures of a Loos heroine are seen in a very topical appropriate setting at Bretton Woods. Mr. Barsley's drawings are as original as his type of satire; his skill and technique have greatly improved since *Ritzkrieg*.

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The usual prizes are offered for twenty lines of verse expressing the preferences and prejudices excited by Christian names.

Report by Roger Marvell

A popular competition, and I wish I could print twenty entries. Sterne and his disciple Balzac, both of whom believed in the influence of names, evidently spoke for us all. I admire the entries of Yorick

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Pomfret, R. S. Jaffray, Guy Innes, Allan M. Laing, Joyce Johnson, Leslie Johnson, Terence Melican, E. W. Fordham, Lamsilon, Stanley French and Pibwob. But after painful consideration, I recommend a guinea each to R. J. P. Hewison and N. P. Meadway, and the rest of the prize money to be divided between Douglas Hawson, W. B. Copeland, Able Seaman John Roger Till and Muriel Sly.

First Prizes

GIVE A DOG A BAD NAME

A nice enquiry 'twere to pose
  Why name and man so oft agree—
If each to other ilker grows
  By human onomatopee;

Or if the Fates, with iron rule,
  Eponymously nuncupate;
If Algy only sounds a fool,
  Or is one predeterminate.

For we, howe'er the discourse go,
  Expect (and find) a hearty Will,
A rustic George, a rugged Joe
  And Claude a very daffodil.

Then, turning to the distaff side
  (Yarn-spinning still is quite the fashion),
See Helen fair, of queenly pride,
  Dolores dark, in smouldering passion.

Good parents, spare your tender babes,
  Nomenclature unkind, uncouth,
Lest Ferdie prove, and Zeke and Abe,
  Voltaire of Habakkuk spoke truth.

R. J. P. Hewison.

Spare me the Berts (Her-, Cuth-, and Eg-)
They are a noisome crew,
And from Theophilus, I beg,
O Lord, defend me too.
With honest John I'll shake a hand,
With George I'll drink a toast,
But Percival I cannot stand,
And Sid offends me most.
To Phyllis sweet I bow and smile,
Find Celia engaging,
Am left unmoved by Phoebe's wile,
Think Ermyntrude enraging.
Pale Helen is a goddess still,
And Jennifer's appealing,
But Gert and Daisy make me ill
And Poppy sends me reeling.
Preserve me, Lord, from Rose and Vi,
From Prue and Pearl, from Eve and Di.

N. P. Meadway.

Second Prizes

I'm averse to all Christian names,
Sensing the butler behind the James
And feeling a mug
When somebody hails me as "Doug!"
I sniff at Sid, and I wince at Perce,
Find Bill rather common and Gus much worse,
It's the same with the women, mere mention of Gert
Causes shudders and Sue is too pert;
Sally's not up my street,
Chloe's saccharine-sweet.
And the longer ones, too, say Amanda—
Old-fashioned, or Winston propaganda!
Isabella—a mouthful! Augustus—what that midget?
And the most English Yvonne and un-Irish Bridget!
And the boys who are dated by Verdun or Foch—
Can you wonder I lump them together as "bosh"
And beg you to leave Christian names to the jeeps
And the tanks and the lorries for keeps,
And, aping the peaceful Rolls-Bentley or Humber,
Be content with a letter or two and a number.

Douglas Hawson.

Algernon seems to me vapid and weak,
Bertie's a bounder, and Cuthbert a freak,
Delia should be a dear little thing,
Eve is all innocence—armed with a sting.
Francis is almost a hermaphrodite,
Gertie a gad-about, Helen just right,
Inez a dark-eyed and dangerous jade,
Judy a bit of a flirt, I'm afraid.
Kathleen is lovely and fragrant and neat,
Lucy is countrified, Molly too sweet.
Nina's a Goddess and Olive is coy,
Patrick a regular broth of a boy.
Queenie suggests to me little but cake,
Robert's the strong man, but Simon a snake.
Thomas is stolid and solemn and sane,
Unity gives me a bit of a pain.
Vicki and Willie wear tortoiseshell specs,
Xavier only gets in for the "X"
Yvonne is frivolous, fuzzy and fair,
Zena—let's risk it and say she's a Dare.

W. B. Copeland.

FRAGMENT FROM AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

They say if you want a classy dame
Don't have an Anglo-Saxon name:
Anton or Carl can bring to bed
A wench who'd never look at Fred.
And that's not all. It occurred to me
When I used to scribble at the B.B.C.
That Michaels, Cecils, Basils stood
A priority chance of making good.

Alack-a-day! This might have been true
In suede but it isn't in navy blue,
And when a rude sailor I became
I very soon wished that I hadn't a name.

The rum-proud killick of the fo'c's'le mess
Made no attempt to disguise his distress
When he said to me with a baleful leer,
"We don't have ruddy Rogers here.

"Lofty, Nobby, Bash or Joe:
You can take your choice, chum—how's it go?"
And I swear it was *I* who would have gone
If I hadn't remembered my first name (John).

Able Seaman John Roger Till.

Clarence is effeminate,
Cuthbert is a fool,
George is just as dumb as though he'd never been to school.
Peter's still a little boy,
Michael's rough and rowdy,
Harold's thin and Henry's fat and William merely dowdy.

Richard has a high-pitched voice,
Gregory a bass,
Percy is a prig, and John has a freckled face.

Alan is a darling,
Nicholas is nice,
Christopher has lots of charm and also lots of vice.

Charles is strong and silent,
Jeremy's a pet.
Roger *so* romantic (but I haven't met him yet).

Guy has wicked eyes that leer,
Bill is very tough,
Stan says "pleased to meet you" and writes notes upon his cuff.

David, Derek, Donald, Douglas, Shakespeare said it best:
"A rose by any other name," well, you can guess the rest.

Muriel D. Sly.

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